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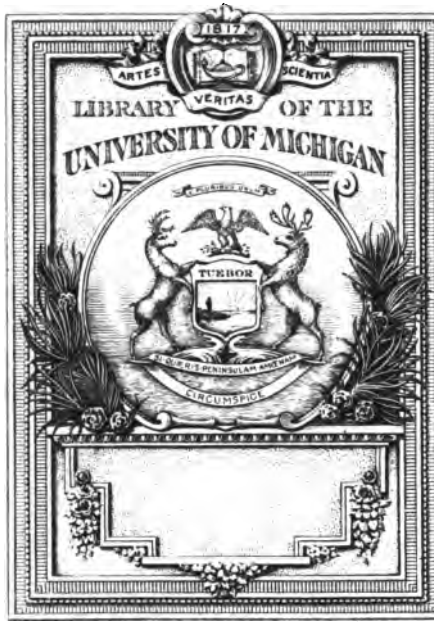
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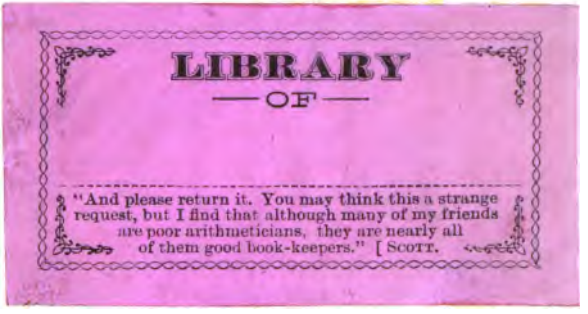

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WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS.

VOL. 1.

Burns's Monument — Calton Hill, Edinburgh.

GLASGOW.

ARCHIBALD FULLARTON & Co

THE

WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS.

EDITED BY

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD,

AND

WILLIAM MOTHERWELL, ESQ.

VOL. I.

GLASGOW:
ARCHIBALD FULLARTON, AND CO.
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AND 6, ROXBURGH PLACE, EDINBURGH.

1840.

GLASGOW:
FULLARTON AND CO., PRINTERS, VILLAFIELD

ADDRESS.

IN presenting the Public with a New Edition of the whole Works of the great National Poet of Scotland, it has been one of the first aims of the Publishers to combine accuracy of Text with elegance of Typography and beauty of Graphical illustration. For this purpose the Text has been diligently collated with that of all prior Editions, a new Type has been procured for the Work, and the first Artists of the day have been employed to embellish it with Vignettes and other Engravings illustrative of the Scenery either referred to in the Writings of the Poet, or connected with the more striking incidents in his melancholy history. Several important additions, as well to the Poems as to the general Correspondence of Burns, derived from unquestionable sources, will, for the first time, appear in this Edition. No scrap or snatch of any merit, attributable to Burns, which can be obtained, will be omitted, nor any characteristic and well-authenticated anecdote of the Poet, illustrating either his character or genius, uncollected, in what the Publishers believe will in truth be the most complete and accurate edition of his Works hitherto given to the public. To the whole will be appended a concise, luminous, and singularly interesting Memoir of the Poet's Life, from the pen of the Ettrick Shepherd. The Poems and Letters will also be accompanied with Critical Comments and Elucidations by the same gifted individual, while much curious, literary, biographical, and anecdotical information will be supplied by Mr WILLIAM MOTHERWELL, whose poetic genius and extensive acquaintance with all that relates to Scottish poetry and song, have been signally evinced by the high excellence of his original poetry, and the distinguished ability with which he has edited the Minstrelsy of the olden time.

In the Song department also, many important and interesting communications have been received from Mr P. Buchan, Aberdeen, the distinguished and indefatigable editor of the 'Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland,'—to whose merit in this department of literature Sir Walter Scott has borne such ample testimony in his 'Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry,' prefixed to the last edition of the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.

About one hundred and eighty Poems and Songs will appear in this edition which are not to be found in Dr Currie's, constituting this the most complete edition of Burns' poetical Works yet given to the public. Many of the additional articles are entitled to rank among the very best of our author's productions. Of these the present volume contains above FORTY PIECES.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION OF BURNS' POEMS.

PUBLISHED AT KILMARNOCK IN 1786.

THE following trifles are not the production of the Poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and, perhaps amid the elegancies and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these and other celebrated names, their countrymen, are, at least in their original language, *a fountain shut up, and a book sealed.* Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulses of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think any thing of his worth showing; and none of the following works were composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind—these were his motives for

courting the Muses, and in these he found poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as—an impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and, because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scotch rhymes together, looking upon himself as a poet of no small consequence, forsooth!

It is an observation of that celebrated poet, Shenstone, whose divine elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species, that "*Humility* has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!" If any critic catches at the word *genius*, the author tells him once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done, would be a manœuvre below the worst character, which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawnings of the poor, unfortunate Fergusson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, declares, that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scotch poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame than for servile imitation.

To his Subscribers, the Author returns his most sincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter but the

heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship, for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life; but if, after a fair, candid and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dulness and nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.

DEDICATION

OF THE SECOND EDITION OF THE POEMS, FORMERLY PRINTED.

TO THE

NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN

OF THE

CALEDONIAN HUNT.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

A Scottish Bard, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his country's service—where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his native land; those who bear the honours and inherit the virtues of their ancestors? The Poetic Genius of my country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha—at the plough; and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil, in my native tongue: I tuned my wild, artless notes, as she inspired. She whispered me to come to this ancient Metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my Songs under your honoured protection: I now obey her dictates.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours; that path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is

ashamed of it. Nor do I present this address with the venal soul of a servile Author, looking for a continuation of those favours: I was bred to the plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my country, that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the Great Fountain of Honour, the Monarch of the Universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to waken the Echoes, in the ancient and favourite amusement of your forefathers, may Pleasure ever be of your party; and may Social Joy await your return. When harassed in courts or camps with the jostlings of bad men and bad measures, may the honest consciousness of injured worth attend your return to your native seats; and may domestic happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May corruption shrink at your kindling indignant glance; and may tyranny in the Ruler, and licentiousness in the People, equally find you an inexorable foe!

I have the honour to be,
With the sincerest gratitude,
and highest respect,
My Lords and Gentlemen,
Your most devoted humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH,
April 4, 1787.

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POEMS,

CHIEFLY SCOTTISH.

THE TWA DOGS:*

A TALE.

'Twas in that place o Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' Auld King Coil,
Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

* I know of no lines in verse, that flow so purely from nature, as the description of the two dogs which follows. That of the Newfoundland dog is altogether inimitable. What a fine fellow he had been! One may copy some traits of nature pretty closely, but it is impossible to copy Burns. This tale was written off hand, just as the Kilmarnock edition of the poems was going to the press. *Luath* was a real character, and the bard's own dog. He is likewise a good-hearted sagacious tyke, and the characters are all along well kept up. "The dog," says Gilbert Burns, in his very interesting recollections of his brother, "had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person the night before my father's death. Robert said to me, that he should like to confer such immortality as he could bestow upon his old friend Luath, and that he had a great mind to introduce something into the book, (the Kilmarnock edition of his poems,) under the title of *Stanzas to the memory of a quadruped Friend*; but this plan was given up for the tale as it now stands. *Cæsar* was merely the creature of the poet's imagination," says the same authority, "created for the purpose of holding chat with his favourite *Luath*." In how different a shape Burns shows his affection for a faithful and beloved dog compared with Byron! He certainly loses nothing by the comparison. H.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him Cæsar,
Was keepit for his Honour's pleasure:
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Whare sailors gang to fish for cod.

His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar,
Show'd him the gentleman and scholar:
But tho' he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride—nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin',
Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gipsey's messin.
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,
But he wad stan't as glad to see him,
And stroan't on stanes and hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend and comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,*
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash and faithful tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.
His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,
Aye gat him friends in ilka place.
His breast was white, his touzie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gaucie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
And unco pack and thick thegither;

* Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's Fingal.

Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd and snowkit;
Whyles mice and moudieworts they howkit;
Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
And worry'd ither in diversion;
Until wi' daffin weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down,
And there began a lang digression,
About the lords o' the creation.

CÆSAR.

I've aften wonder'd, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
And when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

Our laird gets in his racked rents,
His coals, his kain, and a' his stents;
He rises when he likes himsel;
His flunkies answer at the bell;
He ca's his coach, he ca's his horse:
He draws a bonnie silken purse
As lang's my tail, whare, thro' the steeks,
The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
And tho' the gentry first are stechin,
Yet ev'n the ha' folk fill their pechan
Wi' sauce, ragouts, and sic like trashtrie,
That's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our Whipper-in, wee blastit wonner,*
Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner,

* We learn from Mr Chambers, that, "In a cottage amidst the Coilsfield-woods, lives (1833) Hugh Andrew, aged 73, who, in Burns' days, served Colonel Montgomery in the capacity of whipper-in. We conversed with this man, and obtained from him a description of Highland Mary, which he was the more

Better than ony tenant man
His Honour has in a' the lan';
And what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
I own it's past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't enough;
A cottar howkin in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin a dyke,
Baring a quarry, and sic like,
Himself, a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
And nought but his han' darg, to keep
Them right and tight in thack and rape.

And when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health, or want o' masters,
Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
And they maun starve o' cauld and hunger;
But, how it comes I never kenn'd it,
They're maistly wonderfu' contented;
And buirdly chiels, and clever hizzies,
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

likely to give correct, as he 'had ance a kind o' notion o' the lass himsel.' He remembers seeing Burns coming one day, in his bluish-grey home-made clothes, and blue rig-and-fur stockings, to be introduced to the lady of Colonel Montgomery. He was quite well known to Burns, having occasionally to act as a steward in the Tarbolton Lodge when the poet was president. Honest Hugh tells, that Burns had *him* in his eye in the verses of the 'Twa Dogs.'

'Our Whipper-in, wee blastit wonner,
Puir worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
Better than ony tenant man
His honour has in a' the lan'.'

The honour is not likely to be disputed."—M.

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
How huff'd, and cuff'd, and disrespeckit!
Lord, man, our gentry care as little
For delvers, ditchers, and sic cattle;
They gang as saucy by poor folk,
As I wad by a stinking brock.

I've notic'd, on our Laird's court-day,
And monie a time my heart's been wae,
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they maun thole a factor's snash;
He'll stamp and threaten, curse and swear,
He'll apprehend them, poind their gear;
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
And hear it a', and fear and tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches;
But surely poor folk maun be wretches!

LUATH.

They're nae sae wretched's ane wad think;
Tho' constantly on poortith's brink:
They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance and fortune are sae guided,
They're aye in less or mair provided;
And tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their grushie weans and faithfu' wives;
The prattling things are just their pride
That sweetens a' their fire-side.

And whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy
Can make the bodies unco happy;
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs:
They'll talk o' patronage and priests,
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts,
Or tell what new taxation's comin',
And ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmass returns,
They get the jovial, ranting kirns,
When rural life, o' every station,
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, and social Mirth
Forgets there's Care upon the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty winds;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
And sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The luntin pipe, and sneeshin mill,
Are handed round wi' right guid will;
The cantie auld folks crackin crouse,
The young anes rantin thro' the house,—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.*

Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre often play'd.
There's monie a creditable stock
O' decent, honest, fawsont folk,
Are riven out baith root and branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster
In favour wi' some gentle master,

* Many an hundred time have I seen this description verified to the letter.—H.

Wha, aiblins, thrang a parliamentin',
For Britain's guid his saul indenun —

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it:
For Britain's guid!—guid faith, I doubt it!
Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him,
And saying ay or no's they bid him:
At operas and plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading:
Or may be, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais takes a waft,
To mak a tour, and tak a whirl,
To learn bon ton and see the worl'.

There, at Vienna or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entails!
Or by Madrid he takes the route,
To thrum guitars, and fecht wi' nowt;
Or down Italian vista startles,
Whore hunting amang groves o' myrtles;
Then bouses drumly German water,
To mak himsel look fair and fatter,
And clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.
For Britain's guid!—for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, and faction.

LUATH.

Hech man! dear sirs! is that the gate
They waste sae mony a braw estate!
Are we sae foughten and harass'd
For gear to gang that gate at last!

O would they stay aback frae courts,
And please themsels wi' country sports,

It wad for every ane be better,
The Laird, the Tenant, and the Cotter!
For thae frank, rantin, ramblin billies,
Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows;
Except for breaking o' their timmer,
Or speakin lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin o' a hare or moor-cock,
The ne'er a bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, Master Cæsar,
Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure!
Nae cauld or hunger e'er can steer them,
The vera thought o't need na fear them.

CÆSAR.

Lord, man, were ye but whyles whare I am
The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em.

It's true, they need na starve or sweat,
Thro' winter's cauld, or simmer's heat;
They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
And fill auld age with grips and granes:
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themsels to vex them;
And aye the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion less will hurt them.
A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acres till'd, he's right enough;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her dizzen's done, she's unco weel:
But Gentlemen, and Ladies warst,
Wi' ev'n down want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank, and lazy;
Tho' deil haet ails them, yet uneasy;

Their days insipid, dull, and tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, and restless;
And even their sports, their balls, and races,
Their galloping through public places,
There's sic parade, sic pomp, and art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.
The men cast out in party matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debauches:
Ae night they're mad wi' drink and whoring,
Niest day their life is past enduring.
The ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great and gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They're a' run deils and jads thegither.
Whyles, o'er the wee bit cup and platie,
They sip the scandal potion pretty;
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks
Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
And cheat like onie unhang'd blackguard.

There's some exception, man and woman;
But this is Gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
And darker gloaming brought the night;
The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone;
The kye stood rowtin i' the loan;
When up they gat, and shook their lugs,
Rejoic'd they were na men but dogs;
And each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day. *

* In reference to this poem we think it right to give the sentiments of Dr Currie, the first biographer of Burns:—"The humour of Burns is of a richer vein than that of Ramsay or Fergusson, both of whom, as he himself informs us, he had 'frequently in his eye, but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than to servile

imitation.' His descriptive poems, whether the objects on which they are employed be comic or serious, animate or inanimate, are of the highest order. A superiority of this kind is essential to every species of poetical excellence. In one of his earlier poems his plan seems to be to inculcate a lesson of contentment on the lower classes of society, by showing that their superiors are neither much better nor happier than themselves; and this he chooses to execute in the form of a dialogue between two dogs. He introduces this dialogue by an account of the persons and characters of the speakers. The first, whom he has named *Cæsar*, is a dog of condition:

> 'His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar,
> Show'd him the gentleman and scholar.'

High bred though he is, he is, however, full of condescension:

> 'At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
> Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,
> But he wad stan't as glad to see him,
> And stroan't on stanes and hillocks wi' him.'

The other, *Luath*, is 'a ploughman's collie;' but a cur of a good heart and a sound understanding. Never were 'twa dogs' so exquisitely delineated. Their gambols, before they sit down to moralise, are described with an equal degree of happiness; and through the whole dialogue, the character, as well as the different condition of the two speakers, is kept in view. The dogs of Burns, excepting in their talent for moralizing, are downright dogs; and not like the horses of Swift, or the hind and panther of Dryden, men in the shape of brutes. It is this circumstance that heightens the humour of the dialogue. The 'twa dogs' are constantly kept before our eyes, and the contrast between their form and character as dogs, and the sagacity of their conversation, heighten the humour and deepen the impression of the poet's satire. Though in this poem the chief excellence may be considered as humour, yet great talents are displayed in its composition; the happiest powers of description, and the deepest insight into the human heart."

Equally complimentary is the notice of Mr Hazlitt, who says, "His Twa Dogs is a very spirited piece of description, both as it respects the animal and human creation, and gives a very vivid idea of the manners both of high and low life. The burlesque panegyric of the first dog,

> 'His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar,
> Show'd him the gentleman and scholar:'

reminds one of Launce's account of his dog Crabbe, where he is said, as an instance of his being in the way of promotion, 'to have got among three or four gentleman-like dogs under the duke's table.'"—M.

SCOTCH DRINK.*

Gie him strong drink, until he wink,
That's sinking in despair;
And liquor guid to fire his bluid,
That's prest wi' grief and care;
There let him bouse, and deep carouse,
Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
Till he forgets his loves or debts,
And minds his griefs no more.

SOLOMON'S PROVERBS, xxxi. 6, 7.

LET other Poets raise a fracas,
'Bout vines, and wines, and drunken Bacchus,
And crabbit names and stories wrack us,
And grate our lug,
I sing the juice Scots bear can mak us,
In glass or jug.

O thou, my Muse! guid auld Scotch Drink;
Whether thro' wimpling worms thou jink,
Or, richly brown, ream o'er the brink,
In glorious faem,
Inspire me, till I lisp and wink,
To sing thy name!

Let husky Wheat the haughs adorn,
And Aits set up their awnie horn,
And Pease and Beans at e'en or morn,
Perfume the plain,

* This is one of our bard's early pieces, and bears evident marks of juvenility. It is asserted, that when he wrote it he had scarcely ever drank any strong drink, which is probable, as it is the production of 1786. The praise of whisky is always a favourite subject with Burns, and the effects produced by it in the smithy, and also on a Scotsman in the field of battle, in the next poem, are both capital. Some of the stanzas, it is true, are rather rough spun.—H.

Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn,
Thou king o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones, the wale o' food!
Or tumblin' in the boiling flood
Wi' kail and beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame and keeps us livin';
Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin',
When heavy dragg'd wi' pine and grievin';
But, oil'd by thee!
The wheels o' life gae down-hill, scrievin'
Wi' rattlin glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear;
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair,
At's weary toil;
Thou even brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft clad in massy silver weed,
Wi' Gentles thou erects thy head;
Yet humbly kind in time o' need,
The poor man's wine,
His wee drap parritch or his bread,
Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairs and rants?
Ev'n godly meetings o' the saunts,
By thee inspir'd,
When gaping they besiege the tents,
Are doubly fir'd.

That merry night we get the corn in,
O sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
Or reeking on a New-year morning
In cog or bicker,
And just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,
And gusty sucker!

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
And ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
O rare! to see thee fizz and freath
I' th' lugget caup!
Then Burnewin* comes on like death
At every chaup.

Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, banie, ploughman chiel,
Brings hard owerhip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong forehammer,
Till block and studdie ring and reel
Wi' dinsome clamour.

When skirlin weanies see the light,
Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,
How fumbling cuifs their dearies slight;
Wae worth the name!
Nae howdie gets a social night,
Or plack frae them.

When neebors anger at a plea,
And just as wud as wud can be,
How easy can the Barley-bree
Cement the quarrel!
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee,
To taste the barrel.

* *Burnewin—Burn-the-wind*—the blacksmith—an appropriate title.

Alake! that e'er my muse has reason
To wyte her countrymen wi' treason!
But monie daily weet their weason
Wi' liquors nice,
And hardly, in a winter's season,
E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that brandy, burning trash!
Fell source o' monie a pain and brash!
Twins monie a poor, doylt, drunken hash,
O' half his days;
And sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst faes.

Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well!
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor plackless devils like mysel!
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blather wrench,
And gouts torment him inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass of Whisky punch
Wi' honest men.

O Whisky! soul o' plays and pranks!
Accept a Bardie's humble thanks!
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
Are my poor verses!
Thou comes——they rattle i' their ranks
At ither's a - - - s!

Thee, Ferintosh! O sadly lost!
Scotland lament frae coast to coast!

Now colic grips, and barkin hoast,
May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast
Is ta'en awa!

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the Whisky Stells their prize!
Haud up thy han', Deil! ance, twice, thrice!
There, seize the blinkers;
And bake them up in brunstane pies
For poor damn'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scone, and Whisky gill,
And rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
Tak' a' the rest,
And deal't about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER

TO THE

SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.*

Dearest of Distillation! last and best——
——How art thou lost!——
PARODY ON MILTON.

YE Irish Lords, ye Knights and Squires,
Wha represent our brughs and shires,

* This is likewise one of our bard's earliest compositions, it having been written upon the act relating to the Scots distilleries 1786, and of course is one of his Mossgiel poems. That he had been but seldom in the changehouses at that period is proven by the circumstance of auld Nanse Tinnock, his Mauchline hostess, scarce knowing him; and when told of the compliment he had paid to her by a kindly mention of her name, she shook her head

And doucely manage our affairs
In parliament,
To you a simple Poet's prayers
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roupet Muse is hearse;
Your Honours' hearts wi' grief 'twad pierce,
To see her sittin on her a—
Low i' the dust,
And scriechin out prosaic verse,
And like to brust!

and said, that "Robie Burns might be a very clever lad, but he certainly was unco regardless as to what he said, for to the best o' her belief he had never ta'en three half mutchkins in her house a' his life." Mr Heron, whom I regard as a much more dissipated character than Burns, says of him, and he knew him considerably well, that "the bucks of Edinburgh accomplished that in which the boors of Ayrshire had failed; for, after residing some months in Edinburgh, he began to estrange himself not altogether, but in some measure, from graver friends. Too many of his hours were now spent at the tables of persons who delighted to urge conviviality to drunkenness, in the tavern or in the brothel." If Heron knew of such things, it is a sign he was there himself, and ought to have been the last person to speak about it. I may well use Burns' own terms of him:

The ill thief blaw the Heron south,
And never drink be near his drouth,
He tauld mysel by word o' mouth,
He'd tak my letter,
I lippen'd to the chiel in truth,
And bade nae better,

But aiblins honest Mr Heron
Had at that time some dainty fair one,
To ware his theologic care on
And holy study;
And tired o' sauls to waste his lair on,
E'en tried the body.

This is a good broad hint what kind o' chap Mr Heron was; but as the old proverb runs, "Ill doers are aye ill sayers."—H.

Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
Scotland and me's in great affliction,
E'er since they laid that curst restriction
On Aquavitæ;
And rouse them up to strong conviction,
And move their pity.

Stand forth, and tell yon Premier youth
The honest, open, naked truth:
Tell him o' mine and Scotland's drouth,
His servants humble:
The muckle devil blaw ye south,
If ye dissemble!

Does ony great man glunch and gloom?
Speak out and never fash your thumb!
Let posts and pensions sink or soom
Wi' them wha grant 'em:
If honestly they canna come,
Far better want 'em.

In gathering votes you were na slack;
Now stand as tightly by your tack;
Ne'er claw your lug, and fidge your back,
And hum and haw;
But raise your arm, and tell your crack
Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greeting owre her thrissle;
Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whissle;
And damn'd excisemen in a bussle,
Seizin a stell,
Triumphant crushin't like a mussel
Or lampit shell.

Then on the tither hand present her,
A blackguard smuggler right behint her,

And cheek-for-chow, a chuffie vintner,
Colleaguing join,
Picking her pouch as bare as winter
Of a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld Mither's pot
Thus dung in staves,
And plunder'd o' her hindmost groat
By gallows knaves?

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trode in the mire out o' a' sight!
But could I like Montgomeries fight,
Or gab like Boswell,
There's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
And tie some hose well.

God bless your Honours, can you see't,
The kind, auld, cantie Carlin greet!
And no get warmly to your feet,
And gar them hear it,
And tell them wi' a patriot heat,
Ye winna bear it?

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
To round the period and pause,
And wi' rhetoric clause on clause
To mak harangues;
Then echo thro' Saint Stephen's wa's
Auld Scotland's wrangs.

Dempster, a true blue Scot I'se warran;
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste Kilkerran;*

* Sir Adam Ferguson.

And that glib-gabbet Highland Baron,
The Laird o' Graham ;*
And ane, a chap that's damn'd auldfarran,
Dundas his name.

Erskine, a spunkie Norland billie ;
True Campbells, Frederick and Ilay ;
And Livingstone, the bauld Sir Willie!
And monie ithers,
Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
Might own for brithers.†

Arouse, my boys! exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her kettle;
Or faith! I'll wad my new pleugh-pettle,
Ye'll see't or lang,
She'll teach you, wi' a reeking whittle,
Anither sang.

This while she's been in crankous mood,
Her lost Militia fir'd her bluid ;
(Deil na they never mair do guid,
Play'd her that pliskie!)
And now she's like to rin red-wud
About her whisky.

And Lord, if ance they pit her till't,
Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt,

* The present Duke of Montrose.

† In Burns' book of manuscripts, after this verse, there appears the following:—

Thee, sodger Hugh, my watchman stented,
If bardies e'er are represented ;
I ken if that your sword were wanted
Ye'd lend your hand :
But when there's ought to say anent it,
Ye're at a stand.

Sodger Hugh was evidently the late Earl of Eglinton, then Colonel Montgomery of Coilsfield, and member of parliament for the county of Ayr.—M.

And durk and pistol at her belt,
She'll tak the streets,
And rin her whittle to the hilt,
I' th' first she meets!

For Gude sake, Sirs! then speak her fair,
And straik her cannie wi' the hair,
And to the muckle house repair,
Wi' instant speed,
And strive, wi' a' your wit and lear
To get remeed.

Yon I'll tongu'd tinkler Charlie Fox,
May taunt you wi' his jeers and mocks;
But gie him't het, my hearty cocks!
E'en cowe the caddie!
And send him to his dicing box
And sportin lady.

Tell yon guid bluid o' auld Boconnock's
I'll be his debt twa mashlum bonnocks,
And drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's*
Nine times a-week,
If he some scheme, like tea and winnocks,
Wad kindly seek.

*For the following information regarding this interesting old hostess, we are indebted to our talented friend Mr Chambers. "Nanse Tinnock is long deceased, and no one has caught up her mantle. She is described as having been a true *ale-wife*, in the proverbial sense of the word—close, discreet, civil, and no tale-teller. When any neighbouring wife came, asking if *her John* was here, 'Oh no,' Nanse would reply, shaking money in her pocket as she spoke, 'he's no here,' implying to the querist that the husband was not in the house, while she meant to herself that he was not among her half-pence—thus keeping the word of promise to the ear, but breaking it to the hope. Her house was one of two stories, and has a front towards the street, by which Burns must have entered Mauchline from Mossgiel. The date over the door is 1744. It is remembered, however, that Nanse never could understand how the poet should have talked of en-

Engraved by Samuel Freeman.

NANSE TINNOCK,

BURNS'S FAVOURITE HOSTESS AT MAUCHLINE,

Vide Earnest Cry & Pray.

GLASGOW,

ARCHIBALD FULLARTON & Co.

Could he some commutation broach,
I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
He need na fear their foul reproach
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie queer hotch-potch,
The Coalition.

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue;
She's just a devil wi' a rung;
And if she promise auld or young
To tak their part,
Tho' by the neck she should be strung,
She'll no desert.

And now ye chosen Five-and-Forty,
May still your Mither's heart support ye;
Then, tho' a Minister grow dorty,
And kick your place,
Ye'll snap your fingers, poor and hearty,
Before his face.

God bless your Honours a' your days,
Wi' sowps o' kail and brats o' claise,
In spite o' a' the thievish kaes,
That haunt St Jamie's!
Your humble Poet sings and prays
While Rab his name is.

joying himself in her house 'nine times a-week.' 'The *lad*,' she said, 'hardly ever drank three half-mutchkins under her roof in his life.' Nanse, probably, had never heard of the *poetical* licence. In truth, Nanse's hostelry was not the only one in Mauchline which Burns resorted to: a rather better-looking house, at the opening of the Cowgate, kept by a person named John Dove, and then and still bearing the arms of Sir John Whiteford of Ballochmyle, was also a haunt of the poet, having this high recommendation, that its back windows surveyed those of the house in which his 'Jean' resided. The reader will recollect a droll epitaph on John Dove, in which the honest landlord's religion is made out to be a mere comparative appreciation of his various liquors."—M.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let half-starv'd slaves in warmer skies
See future wines, rich clust'ring, rise;
Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
But blithe and frisky,
She eyes her freeborn, martial boys,
Tak aff their Whisky.

What tho' their Phœbus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and beauty charms!
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
The scented groves,
Or hounded forth, dishonour arms
In hungry droves.

Their gun's a burden on their shouther,
They downa bide the stink o' powther;
Their bauldest thought's a hank'ring swither
To stan' or rin,
Till skelp—a shot—they're aff, a' throwther,
To save their skin.

But bring a Scotsman frae his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
Say, such is royal George's will,
And there's the foe,
He has nae thought but how to kill
Twa at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him;
Wi' bluidy hand a welcome gies him;
And when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin lea'es him
In faint huzzas.

Sages their solemn een may steek,
And raise a philosophic reek,
And physically causes seek,
In clime and season ;
But tell me Whisky's name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.

Scotland, my auld, respected Mither!
Tho' whiles ye moistify your leather,
Till whare ye sit, on craps o' heather,
Ye tine your dam ;
Freedom and Whisky gang thegither!
Tak aff your dram ! *

* Burns' postscripts are oftentimes, like those of a lady's letter, the more important part of the piece to which they are attached. In this case it is eminently so, and other instances will suggest themselves to the reader. Here we have some most quotable passages, and few have been more frequently cited than the fourth and fifth stanzas, the last of which is quite pictorial, while there are many who again and again must have heard the sentiment, "Freedom and Whisky gang thegither," urged as an adage for the further prolongation of convivial enjoyments. Though we are no enemies to boon companionship, still with Hector Macneil we must say,

Robin Burns, in monie a ditty,
Loudly sings in Whisky's praise ;
Sweet his sang!—the mair's the pity
E'er on it he waur'd sic lays.

O' a' the ills poor Caledonia
E'er yet pree'd, or e'er will taste,
Brew'd in hell's black Pandemonia,
Whisky's ills will skaith her maist. M.

THE HOLY FAIR.* †

A robe of seeming truth and trust
Hid crafty Observation;
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
The dirk of Defamation:
A mask that like the gorget show'd,
Dye-varying on the pigeon;
And for a mantle large and broad,
He wrapt him in Religion.

HYPOCRISY A-LA-MODE.

I.

UPON a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,

* *Holy Fair* is a common phrase in the West of Scotland for a sacramental occasion; and, "Mauchline was the scene of this poem which, as is well known, describes the strange mixture of devotion and festivity that used to be observable at a country celebration of the communion in Scotland. The scene more immediately described was the preaching which took place in the churchyard, during the performance of the more solemn service within the house of worship. In front of a tent erected as a pulpit for the clergyman, sat a multitude of people, including many strangers,

—— Some thinkin' on their sins,
And some upon their claes——

as the satirical bard describes them. The parish church of Burns' time—a long low ungainly building—has recently been replaced by a smart Gothic edifice; but the rest of the scene is the same. The stranger still sees 'the Cowgate,' through which Common Sense made his escape, at the appearance of a particular clergyman on the preaching scene. [This, by the way, was not meant figuratively, but referred to the poet's friend Dr Mackenzie, who had corresponded with him under that assumed name.] He may also still see Nanse Tinnock's change-house, which used to fill, during the intervals of preaching, with 'yill-caup commentators.' This house adjoins to the churchyard, and has a back-door leading into that area—so that it must have been particularly convenient for such of the congregation as desired a solacement of drink and victuals."—*Chambers.*

† With what extraordinary rapidity Burns seems to have improved in composition at that period; for it appears from a letter of his

I walked forth to view the corn,
And snuff the caller air.
The rising sun owre Galston muirs,
Wi' glorious light was glintin;
The hares were hirplin down the furs,
The lav'rocks they were chantin
Fu' sweet that day.

II.

As lightsomely I glowr'd abroad,
To see a scene sae gay,

own to Mr Richmond, that this remarkable poem was written on the year subsequent to that on which the former two were written. One would naturally judge from the style that they had been composed much earlier, but not seen till that year when the publication was first broached, for he does not say *composed* that year, but *produced*. I am therefore disposed to consider them, from the subjects as well as the composition, as more juvenile productions than the Holy Fair. This, however, is a most extraordinary poem, and was received both with admiration and terror. Divines vented their anathemas on the poet in all their private and public meetings, and were terrified to preach before him. It is no doubt a reckless piece of satire, but it is a clever one, and one that must have cut to the bone. It is a masterpiece of the kind, for in it satire keeps its own place, and is made subservient to the poetry of Burns. No partizan of any sect could insinuate that malice had formed its principal inspiration, or that its chief attraction lay in the boldness with which individuals, accustomed to respect and veneration, were held up to ridicule. It was acknowledged even amidst the sternest breathings of wrath, that national manners were once more in the hands of a national poet. That could not be denied by those who shook their heads most gravely over the indiscretions of particular passages, or even by those who justly regretted a too prevailing tone of levity in the treatment of a subject essentially solemn. It is devoutly to be wished that he had taken up the subject in a different light; how many pure and holy feelings there presented themselves to the bard of the Cotter's Saturday Night. And to him who drew so powerfully from the feelings of a sensitive heart, what a field was opened! I blame Gavin Hamilton and some other friends for these wild and half profligate satires of our poet's. It is however an admirable piece, and I would recommend every reader to peruse the eleventh Stanza as the best description ever was drawn; "unkenn'd

Three Hizzies, early at the road,
Cam skelpin up the way;
Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,
But ane wi' lyart lining;
The third, that gaed a-wee a-back,
Was in the fashion shining,
Fu' gay that day.

that day" surpasses all. The verse likewise sets boldly out with a line of a psalm. The design of this poem is borrowed from Robert Fergusson's poem on "Leith Races." If any should doubt this, the following three capital stanzas from the latter will convince him.—

In July month, ae bonny morn,
Whan Nature's rokelay green
Was spread o'er ilka rigg o' corn,
To charm our rovin' een;
Glowrin' about I saw a quean,
The fairest 'neath the lift,
Her een war o' the siller sheen,
Her skin like snawy drift,
Sae white that day.

* * * * * * *

"And wha are ye, my winsome dear,
That taks the gate sae early?
Whar do ye win? gin ane may speer,
For I right meikle ferly
That sic braw buskit laughin lass,
Thir bonny blinks should gie;
And loup like Hebe ower the grass,
As wanton and as free
Frae dool this day."

"I dwall amang the caller springs,
That weet the Land o' Cakes,
And aften tune my canty strings,
At Bridals and late-wakes.
They ca' me Mirth—I ne'er was kend
To grumble or look sour,
But blithe wad be a lift to lend,
Gin ye wad sey my power
And pith this day." H.

III.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
In feature, form, and claes!
Their visage, wither'd, lang, and thin,
And sour as ony slaes:
The third cam up, hap-step-and-lowp,
As light as ony lambie,
And wi' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as e'er she saw me,
Fu' kind that day.

IV.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, "Sweet lass,
I think ye seem to ken me;
I'm sure I've seen that bonnie face,
But yet I canna name ye."
Quo' she, and laughin as she spak,
And taks me by the hands,
"Ye, for my sake, hae gi'en the feck
Of a' the ten commands
A screed some day.

V.

"My name is Fun—your cronie dear,
The nearest friend ye hae;
And this is Superstition here,
And that's Hypocrisy.
I'm gaun to Mauchline Holy Fair
To spend an hour in daffin:
Gin ye'll go there, yon runkled pair,
We will get famous laughin'
At them this day."

VI.

Quoth I, "With a' my heart, I'll do't;
I'll get my Sunday's sark on,

And meet you on the holy spot;
Faith we'se hae fine remarkin'!"
Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time,
And soon I made me ready;
For roads were clad, frae side to side,
Wi' monie a wearie body,
In droves that day.

VII.

Here farmers gash, in ridin' graith,
Gaed hoddin by their cotters;
There swankies young, in braw braid-claith,
Are springin' o'er the gutters.
The lasses, skelpin barefit, thrang,
In silks and scarlets glitter;
Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in monie a whang,
And farls bak'd wi' butter,
Fu' crump that day.

VIII.

When by the plate we set our nose,
Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence,
A greedy glow'r Black Bonnet* throws,
And we maun draw our tippence.
Then in we go to see the show,
On ev'ry side they're gatherin,
Some carrying dails, some chairs and stools,
And some are busy bletherin
Right loud that day.

IX.

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs,
And screen our country Gentry,

* 'Black Bonnet,' a colloquial appellation, bestowed on the church elders or deacons, who in landward parishes in the olden time generally wore black bonnets, when on Sundays they officiated at 'the plate,' in making the usual collection for the poor.—M.

There, Racer Jess,* and twa-three whores,
Are blinkin at the entry.
Here sits a raw of tittlin jades,
Wi' heaving breast and bare neck,
And there a batch of wabster lads,
Blackguarding frae Kilmarnock,
For fun this day.

X.

Here some are thinkin on their sins,
And some upo' their claes;
Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,
Anither sighs and prays:
On this hand sits a chosen swatch,
Wi' screw'd up grace-proud faces;
On that a set o' chaps at watch,
Thrang winkin on the lasses
To chairs that day.

XI.

O happy is that man and blest!
Nae wonder that it pride him!
Wha's ain dear lass, that he likes best,
Comes clinkin down beside him!
Wi' arm reposed on the chair-back,
He sweetly does compose him;
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
And's loof upon her bosom,
Unkenn'd that day.

XII.

Now a' the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation;

* The following notice appeared in the newspapers of February, 1813. "Died at Mauchline a few weeks since, Janet Gibson, consigned to immortality by Burns in his Holy Fair, under the turf appellation of Racer Jess. She was the daughter of 'Poosie Nansie,' who figures in 'The Jolly Beggars.'"—M.

For Moodie speels the holy door,
Wi' tidings o' damnation.*
Should Hornie, as in ancient days,
'Mang sons o' God present him,
The vera sight o' Moodie's face,
To's ain het hame had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

XIII.

Hear how he clears the points o' faith
Wi' rattlin and wi' thumpin'!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He's stampin and he's jumpin'!
His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,
His eldritch squeel and gestures,
Oh, how they fire the heart devout,
Like cantharidian plasters,
On sic a day!

XIV.

But hark! the tent has chang'd its voice;
There's peace and rest nae langer:
For a' the real judges rise,
They canna sit for anger.
Smith opens out his cauld harangues
On practice and on morals;
And aff the godly pour in thrangs,
To gie the jars and barrels
A lift that day

* 'Salvation,' in the first edition, but altered in the second at the suggestion of Dr Blair, who expressed a very high opinion of this poem. It is to be regretted, says Dr Currie, that in his Holy Fair, and in some of his other poems, his humour degenerates into personal satire, and that it is not sufficiently guarded in other respects.—M.

XV.

What signifies his barren shine
Of moral powers and reason?
His English style, and gesture fine,
Are a' clean out o' season.
Like Socrates or Antonine,
Or some auld pagan Heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day.

XVI.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum;
For Peebles, frae the water fit,
Ascends the holy rostrum:
See, up he's got the word o' God,
And meek and mim has view'd it,
While Common-Sense has ta'en the road,
And aff, and up the Cowgate,*
Fast, fast, that day.

XVII.

Wee Miller, niest, the guard relieves,
And Orthodoxy raibles,
Tho' in his heart he weel believes,
And thinks it auld wives' fables:
But, faith! the birkie wants a manse,
So, cannily he hums them;
Altho' his carnal wit and sense
Like hafflins-ways o'ercomes him
At times that day.

* A street, so called, which faces the tent in Mauchline.

XVIII.

Now butt and ben, the change-house fills
Wi' yill-caup commentators;
Here's crying out for bakes and gills,
And there the pint stowp clatters;
While thick and thrang, and loud and lang,
Wi' logic, and wi' Scripture,
They raise a din, that in the end,
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

XIX.

Leeze me on drink! it gies us mair
Than either School or College:
It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
It pangs us fou o' knowledge.
Be't whisky gill, or penny wheep,
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kittle up our notion
By night or day.

XX.

The lads and lasses, blithely bent
To mind baith saul and body,
Sit round the table weel content,
And steer about the toddy.
On this ane's dress, and that ane's leuk,
They're making observations;
While some are cozie i' the neuk,
And forming assignations
To meet some day.

XXI.

But now the Lord's ain trumpet touts,
Till a the hills are rairin,

And echoes back return the shouts:
Black Russel is na spairin:
His piercing words, like Highland swords,
Divide the joints and marrow;
His talk o' Hell, where devils dwell,
Our vera sauls does harrow*
Wi' fright that day.

XXII.

A vast, unbottom'd boundless pit,
Fill'd fou o' lowin brunstane,
Wha's ragin flame, and scorchin heat,
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane!
The half asleep start up wi' fear,
And think they hear it roarin,
When presently it does appear,
'Twas but some neebor snorin
Asleep that day.

XXIII.

'Twad be owre lang a tale, to tell
How monie stories past,
And how they crowded to the yill,
When they were a' dismist:
How drink gaed round, in cogs and caups,
Amang the furms and benches:
And cheese and bread, frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in lunches,
And dawds that day.

XXIV.

In comes a gaucy, gash Guidwife,
And sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck and her knife,
The lasses they are shyer.

* Shakspeare's Hamlet.

The auld Guidmen, about the grace,
Frae side to side they bother
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
And gies them't like a tether,
Fu' lang that day.

XXV.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or melvie his braw claithing!
O wives be mindfu', ance yoursel
How bonnie lads ye wanted,
And dinna, for a kebbuck-heel,
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

XXVI.

Now Clinkumbell, wi' rattling tow,
Begins to jow and croon:
Some swagger hame, the best they dow,
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps the billies halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon:
Wi' faith and hope, and love and drink,
They're a' in famous tune
For crack that day.

XXVII.

How monie hearts this day converts
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane,
As saft as ony flesh is.
There's some are fou' o' love divine;
There's some are fou' o' brandy;
And monie jobs that day begin
May end in Houghmagandie
Some ither day.

DEATH AND DR HORNBOOK.*

A TRUE STORY.

Some books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd:
Ev'n Ministers, they hae been kenn'd,
In holy rapture,
A rousing whid, at times, to vend,
And nail't wi' Scripture.

* The history of this poem, as I gather from several authors, is curious, and well worthy of insertion here. It happened that Mr John Wilson, schoolmaster at Tarbolton, had tried to eke out the scanty subsistence allowed to that useful class of men, by opening a shop to supply the lieges with grocery goods and medicines; and having supplied himself with Buchan's Domestic Medicine and some other quack works of less utility, he had grown hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine. He had, moreover, got a shop bill printed, at the bottom of which was ostentatiously inserted in capitals, ADVICE WILL BE GIVEN AT THE SHOP GRATIS. This, it must be acknowledged, when the man's utter incapacity is considered, rendered him rather fair game for the pen of our inimitable satirist; and, moreover, at a masonic meeting at Tarbolton, the dominie unfortunately happened to bore Burns most confoundedly with his profound skill. As he parted in the evening from this mixture of pedantry and physic at the place where he describes his meeting with Death, one of those floating ideas of apparitions he mentions in his letter to Dr Moore, crossed his mind, and to work he fell, on his poem of Death and Dr Hornbook. Poor Wilson was not only compelled to shut up shop as an apothecary, by this irresistible satire, but the tide of ridicule turned so sore against him, that his pupils one by one deserted him, and he was obliged to abandon his school-craft also. It is impossible to help regretting this, as Wilson and our bard were intimate associates, friends, and rival wits; but Burns knew not the power of his own whip-hand, for I believe he meant nothing further than to raise a good-natured laugh against the self-important quack, and little thought that he was sealing his warrant of banishment from Ayrshire. Dr Hornbook, however, survived the storm, removed to Glasgow, where he was appointed Session-clerk of Gorbals; and, succeeding in business, was often heard over his bowls of punch in the

But this that I am gaun to tell,
Which lately on a night befell,
Is just as true's the deil's in hell
Or Dublin city:
That e'er he nearer comes oursel
'S a muckle pity.

The Clachan yill had made me canty,
I wasna fou, but just had plenty;
I stacher'd whyles, but yet took tent aye
To free the ditches;
And hillocks, stanes, and bushes, kenn'd aye
Frae ghaists and witches.

The rising moon began to glow'r
The distant Cumnock hills out-owre;
To count her horns, wi' a' my pow'r,
I set mysel;
But whether she had three or four,
I could na tell.

I was come round about the hill,
And todlin down on Willie's mill,
Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
To keep me sicker;
Tho' leeward whyles, against my will,
I took a bicker.

I there wi' Something did forgather
That put me in an eerie swither;
An awfu scythe out-owre ae shouther,
Clear-dangling, hang;

Saltmarket to bless the day on which he provoked the castigation of Burns. He was for a long while much missed at Tarbolton, there not being another vender of salts and senna-leaves in the whole country round, nor any medical advice whatsoever. The poem is singularly ludicrous and laughable.—H.

A three-taed leister on the ither
Lay, large and lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
The queerist shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a wame it had ava;
And then, its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp and sma'
As cheeks o' branks.

"Guid-een," quo' I; "Friend! hae ye been mawin,
When ither folk are busy sawin?"*
It seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
But naething spak;
At length, says I, "Friend, whare ye gaun,
Will ye go back?"

It spak right howe,—"My name is Death,
But be na fley'd."—Quoth I, "Guid faith,
Ye're maybe come to stap my breath;
But tent me billie;
I red ye weel, tak care o' skaith,
See, there's a gully!"

"Guidman," quo' he, "put up your whittle,
I'm no design'd to try its mettle:
But if I did, I wad be kittle
To be mislear'd,
I wad na mind it, no, that spittle
Out-owre my beard."

"Weel, weel!" says I, "a bargain be't;
Come, gies your hand, and sae we're gree't;
We'll ease our shanks and tak a seat,
Come, gie's your news;

* This rencounter happened in seed-time, 1785.

This while* ye hae been mony a gate,
At mony a house."

" Ay, ay!" quo' he, and shook his head,
" It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed
Sin' I began to nick the thread,
And choke the breath;
Folk maun do something for their bread,
And sae maun Death.

Sax thousand years are nearhand fled
Sin' I was to the butching bred,
And mony a scheme in vain's been laid,
To stap or scar me;
Till ane Hornbook's ta'en up the trade,
And faith, he'll waur me.

Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the Clachan,
Deil mak his king's hood in a spleuchan!
He's grown sae weel acquaint wi' Buchan†
And ither chaps,
The weans haud out their fingers laughin
And pouk my hips.

See, here's a scythe, and there's a dart,
They hae pierc'd mony a gallant heart;
But Doctor Hornbook, wi' his art
And cursed skill,
Has made them baith no worth a f—t;
Damn'd haet they'll kill.

'Twas but yestreen nae farther gane,
I threw a noble throw at ane;
Wi' less, I'm sure, I've hundreds slain;
But deil-ma-care,

* An epidemical fever was then raging in that country.
† Buchan's Domestic Medicine.

It just play'd dirl on the bane,
But did nae mair.

Hornbook was by, wi' ready art,
And had sae fortify'd the part,
That when I looked to my dart,
It was sae blunt,
Fient haet o't wad hae pierc'd the heart
Of a kail-runt.

I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
I nearhand cowpit wi' my hurry,
But yet the bauld Apothecary
Withstood the shock;
I might as weel hae try'd a quarry
O' hard whin rock.

Ev'n them he canna get attended,
Altho' their face he ne'er had kenn'd it,
Just —— in a kail blade, and send it,
As soon's he smells't,
Baith their disease, and what will mend it,
At once he tells't.

And then a' doctor's saws and whittles,
Of a' dimensions, shapes, and mettles,
A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, and bottles,
He's sure to hae;
Their Latin names as fast he rattles
As A B C.

Calces o' fossils, earth, and trees;
True Salmarinum o' the seas;
The Farina of beans and pease,
He has't in plenty;
Aqua-fontis, what you please,
He can content ye.

Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
Urinus Spiritus of capons;
Or Mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings;
Distill'd per se;
Sal-alkali o' Midge-tail clippings,
And mony mae."

"Waes me for Johnny Ged's* Hole now,"
Quo' I, "if that thae news be true!
His braw calf-ward whare gowans grew,
Sae white and bonnie,
Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plew;
They'll ruin Johnie!"

The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh,
And said, "Ye need na yoke the pleugh,
Kirk-yards will soon be till'd eneugh,
Tak ye nae fear:
They'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a sheugh
In twa-three year.

Whare I kill'd ane a fair strae death,
By loss o' blood or want o' breath,
This night I'm free to tak my aith,
That Hornbook's skill
Has clad a score i' their last claith,
By drap and pill.

An honest Wabster to his trade,
Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel bred,
Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,
When it was sair;
The wife slade cannie to her bed,
But ne'er spak mair.

* The grave-digger.

A country Laird had ta'en the batts,
Or some curmurring in his guts,
His only son for Hornbook sets,
And pays him well;
The lad, for twa guid gimmer pets,
Was laird himsel'.

A bonnie lass, ye kenn'd her name,
Some ill-brewn drink had hov'd her wame
She trusts hersel', to hide the shame,
In Hornbook's care;
Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
To hide it there.

That's just a swatch o' Hornbook's way;
Thus goes he on from day to day;
Thus does he poison, kill, and slay,
And's weel paid for't;
Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
Wi' his damn'd dirt.

But, hark! I'll tell you of a plot,
Tho' dinna ye be speaking o't;
I'll nail the self-conceited sot
As dead's a herrin':
Niest time we meet, I'll wad a groat,
He gets his fairin!"

But just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the twal,
Which raised us baith:
I took the way that pleas'd mysel',
And sae did Death. *

* We subjoin some observations by the celebrated Wordsworth on this poem, which immediately follow those on Tam o' Shanter given elsewhere. "Not less successfully does Burns avail him-

THE BRIGS OF AYR.*

A POEM,

INSCRIBED TO J. BALLANTINE, ESQ., AYR.

THE simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough,
Learning his tuneful trade from every bough;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
Hailing the setting sun, sweet in the green thorn bush;

self of his own character and situation in society, to construct out of them a poetic self,—introduced as a dramatic personage, for the purpose of inspiriting his incidents, diversifying his pictures, recommending his opinions, and giving point to his sentiments. His brother can set me right, if I am mistaken, when I express a belief that, at the time when he wrote his story of 'Death and Dr Hornbook,' he had very rarely been intoxicated, or perhaps even much exhilarated by liquor. Yet how happily does he lead his reader into that track of sensations! and with what lively humour does he describe the disorder of his senses, and the confusion of his understanding, put to test by a deliberate attempt to count the horns of the moon!

'But whether she had three or four
He couldna tell.'

Behold a sudden apparition that disperses this disorder, and in a moment chills him into possession of himself! Coming upon no more important mission than the grisly phantom was charged with, what mode of introduction could have been more efficient or appropriate?"—M.

* This poem resembles The Ghaists, a kirkyard eclogue, by Fergusson, and also his Causeway and Plainstanes. After all, we must acknowledge the truth of what Burns himself says in the preface to the first edition of his poems, that though in many of his pieces he often had Ramsay and Fergusson in his eye, yet still it was "rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation." In the Kilmarnock edition this poem does not occur; it appeared in the first Edinburgh edition.

Regarding the Auld and New Brigs of Ayr, Mr Chambers furnishes the following account:—"The Auld Brig is said to have been built so far back as the reign of Alexander III. It is like all old bridges, very narrow, and consists of several low-bowed arches. It must be mentioned, with whatever regret,

The soaring lark, the perching red-brest shrill,
Or deep-ton'd plovers, grey, wild-whistling o'er the hill;
Shall he, nurst in the Peasant's lowly shed,
To hardy independence bravely bred,
By early Poverty to hardship steel'd,
And train'd to arms in stern Misfortune's field;
Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes?
Or labour hard the panegyric close,
With all the venal soul of dedicating Prose?
No! though his artless strains he rudely sings,
And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,
He glows with all the spirit of the Bard,
Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward.
Still, if some Patron's generous care he trace,
Skill'd in the secret, to bestow with grace;
When Ballantine befriends his humble name,
And hands the rustic stranger up to fame,
With heart-felt throes his grateful bosom swells,
The godlike bliss, to give, alone excels.

. . . . . .

'Twas when the stacks get on their winter hap,
And thack and rape secure the toil-won crap;
Potato-bings are snugged up frae skaith
Of coming Winter's biting, frosty breath;

that, notwithstanding the manful boast made by the ancient structure in the poem regarding its strength and durability, it has been necessary to reduce it from a carriage-way to a mere conveniency for foot passengers, on account of some apprehensions entertained regarding its capability of supporting any considerable weight. The New Brig is a more commodious and elegant structure, crossing the river, as already noticed, about two hundred yards below the former. The citizens of Ayr are mainly indebted for it to the patriotic exertions of the late John Ballantyne, Esq. provost of the town, an intimate friend of Burns, and in whose house the poet wrote the clever *jeu-d'esprit*, in which the two structures are made to canvass their respective merits in so amusing a manner."—M.

The bees rejoicing o'er their summer toils,
Unnumber'd buds and flowers' delicious spoils,
Seal'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
Are doom'd by man, that tyrant o'er the weak,
The death o' devils smoor'd wi' brimstone reek:
The thundering guns are heard on every side,
The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie;
(What warm, poetic heart, but inly bleeds
And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds!)
Nae mair the flower in field or meadow springs;
Nae mair the grove with airy concerts rings,
Except, perhaps, the Robin's whistling glee,
Proud o' the height o' some bit half lang-tree;
The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noontide blaze,
While thick the gossamer waves wanton in the rays.
'Twas in that season, when a simple bard,
Unknown and poor, simplicity's reward,
Ae night within the ancient brugh of Ayr,
By whim inspir'd, or haply prest wi' care;
He left his bed and took his wayward route,
And down by Simpson's* wheel'd the left about:
(Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate,
To witness what I after shall narrate:
Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
He wander'd out he knew not where nor why;)
The drowsy Dungeon-clock† had number'd two,
And Wallace Tower† had sworn the fact was true;
The tide-swoln Firth, with sullen sounding roar,
Thro' the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore:
All else was hush'd as Nature's closed e'e;
The silent moon shone high o'er tower and tree:

* A noted tavern at the Auld Brig end.
† The two steeples.

The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream.

When, lo! on either hand the list'ning Bard,
The clanging sough of whistling wings he heard;
Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air,
Swift as the Gos* drives on the wheeling hare;
Ane on th' Auld Brig his airy shape uprears,
The ither flutters o'er the rising piers:
Our warlock Rhymer instantly descry'd
The Sprites that ower the Brigs of Ayr preside.
(That Bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
And ken the lingo of the sp'ritual folk;
Fays, Spunkies, Kelpies, a', they can explain them,
And ev'n the vera deils they brawly ken them.)
Auld Brig appear'd of ancient Pictish race,
The vera wrinkles Gothic in his face:
He seem'd as he wi' Time had warstled lang,
Yet teughly dour, he bade an unco bang.
New Brig was buskit in a braw new coat,
That he, at Lon'on frae ane Adams, got;
In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a bead,
Wi' virls and whirlygigums at the head.
The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,
Spying the time-worn flaws in every arch;
It chanc'd his new-come neebor took his e'e,
And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he!
Wi' thieveless sneer to see his modish mien,
He, down the water, gies him this guid e'en:—

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na, frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheep-shank,
Ance ye were streekit o'er frae bank to bank!
But gin ye be a brig as auld as me,
Tho' faith that day I doubt ye'll never see;

* The Gos-hawk, or falcon.

There'll be, if that date come, I'll wad a boddle,
Some fewer whigmaleeries in your noddle.

NEW BRIG.

Auld Vandal, ye but show your little mense,
Just much about it wi' your scanty sense;
Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,
Where twa wheel-barrows tremble when they meet,
Your ruin'd, formless bulk, o' stane and lime,
Compare wi' bonnie brigs o' modern time?
There's men o' taste would tak the Ducat-stream,*
Tho' they should cast the very sark and swim,
Ere they would grate their feelings wi' the view
Of sic an ugly, Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk! puff'd up wi' windy pride!
This monie a year I've stood the flood and tide;
And tho' wi' crazy eild I'm sair forfairn,
I'll be a brig, when ye're a shapeless cairn!
As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But twa-three winters will inform ye better,
When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,
Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil,
Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
Or haunted Garpal† draws his feeble source,
Arous'd by blust'ring winds and spotting thowes,
In mony a torrent down the snaw broo rowes;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spate,
Sweeps dams, and mills, and brigs, a' to the gate;

* A noted ford, just above the Auld Brig.

† The banks of Garpal Water is one of the few places in the West of Scotland, where those fancy scaring beings, known by the name of Ghaists, still continue pertinaciously to inhabit.

And from Glenbuck,* down to the Ratton-key,†
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd tumbling sea;
Then down ye'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise!
And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.
A lesson sadly teaching to your cost,
That Architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG.

Fine Architecture, trowth, I needs must say't o't!
The Lord be thankit that we've tint the gate o't!
Gaunt, ghastly, ghaist-alluring edifices,
Hanging with threat'ning jut, like precipices;
O'er arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves,
Supporting roofs fantastic, stony groves:
Windows and doors, in nameless sculpture drest,
With order, symmetry, or taste unblest;
Forms like some bedlam statuary's dream,
The crazed creations of misguided whim;
Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,
And still the second dread command be free,
Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea.
Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
Of any mason, reptile, bird, or beast;
Fit only for a doited Monkish race,
Or frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace,
Or cuifs of later times, wha held the notion,
That sullen gloom was sterling true devotion;
Fancies that our guid Brugh denies protection,
And soon may they expire, unblest with resurrection!

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd, ancient yealings,
Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!

* The source of the river Ayr.
† A small landing-place above the large key.

Ye worthy Proveses, and mony a Baillie,
Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil aye ;
Ye dainty Deacons, and ye douce Conveners,
To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners
Ye godly Councils wha hae blest this town ;
Ye godly Brethren of the sacred gown,
Wha meekly gie your hurdies to the smiters ;
And (what would now be strange) ye godly Writers :
A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo,
Were ye but here, what would ye say or do !
How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,
To see each melancholy alteration ;
And agonizing, curse the time and place
When ye begat the base, degenerate race !
Nae langer Reverend Men, their country's glory,
In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain braid story !
Nae langer thrifty Citizens, and douce,
Meet owre a pint, or in the Council-house :
But staumrel, corky-headed, graceless Gentry,
The herryment and ruin of the country ;
Men, three-parts made by tailors and by barbers,
Wha waste your well-hain'd gear on damn'd new Brigs and Harbours !

NEW BRIG.

Now haud you there ! for faith ye've said enough,
And muckle mair than ye can mak to through.
As for your priesthood, I shall say but little,
Corbies and Clergy are a shot right kittle :
But under favour o' your langer beard,
Abuse o' Magistrates might weel be spar'd :
To liken them to your auld-warld squad,
I must needs say, comparisons are odd.
In Ayr, Wag-wits nae mair can hae a handle,
To mouth 'a Citizen,' a term o' scandal :
Nae mair the Council waddles down the street,
In all the pomp of ignorant conceit ;

Men wha grew wise priggin owre hops and raisins,
Or gather'd liberal views in Bonds and Seisins.
If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
Had shored them with a glimmer of his lamp,
And would to Common-sense, for once betray'd them,
Plain, dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

. . . . . .

What farther clishmaclaver might been said,
What bloody wars, if Sprites had blood to shed,
No man can tell; but all before their sight,
A fairy train appear'd in order bright:
Adown the glittering stream they featly danc'd;
Bright to the moon their various dresses glanc'd;
They footed o'er the watery glass so neat,
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet;
While arts of Minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-ennobling bards heroic ditties sung.
O had M'Lauchlan,* thairm-inspiring sage,
Been there to hear this heavenly band engage,
When thro' his dear Strathspeys they bore with Highland rage;
Or when they struck old Scotia's melting airs,
The lover's raptur'd joys or bleeding cares;
How would his Highland lug been nobler fired,
And even his matchless hand with finer touch inspired!
No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
But all the soul of Music's self was heard;
Harmonious concert rung in every part,
While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

The Genius of the stream in front appears,
A venerable chief advanced in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
His manly leg with garter tangle bound.

* A well known performer of Scottish music on the violin.

Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring;
Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came Rural Joy,
And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye:
All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn,
Led yellow Autumn wreath'd with nodding corn;
Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,
By Hospitality with cloudless brow;
Next follow'd Courage with his martial stride,
From where the Feal* wild-woody coverts hide;
Benevolence, with mild benignant air,
A female form, came from the towers of Stair;†
Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
From simple Catrine‡ their long lov'd abode:
Last, white-robed Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
The broken iron instruments of death;
At sight of whom our Sprites forgat their kindling wrath.§

* A small stream which runs near Coilsfield.

† The poet alludes here to Mrs Stewart of Stair.—Stair was then in her possession. She afterwards removed to Afton-Lodge, on the banks of the Afton, a stream which he subsequently celebrated in a song entitled "Afton Water."—See a letter to Mrs Stewart, in the volume embracing the correspondence of the poet.

‡ A beautiful little place, the retreat of the late professor Dugald Stewart.

§ "This poem," says the first biographer of the Bard, Dr Currie, "irregular and imperfect as it is, displays various and powerful talents, and may serve to illustrate the genius of Burns. In particular, it affords a striking instance of his being carried beyond his original purpose by the powers of imagination. In Fergusson's poem, the *Plainstanes and Causeway* contrast the characters of the different persons who walked upon them. Burns probably conceived, that, by a dialogue between the Old and New Bridge, he might form a humorous contrast between ancient and modern manners in the town of Ayr. Such a dialogue could only be supposed to pass in the stillness of night; and this led our poet into a description of a midnight scene, which excited in a high degree the powers of his imagination. During the whole dialogue the scenery is present to his fancy, and at length it suggests to him a fairy dance of aerial beings, under the

THE ORDINATION.*

For sense they little owe to frugal Heaven—
To please the Mob they hide the little given.

KILMARNOCK Wabsters, fidge and claw,
And pour your creeshie nations;
And ye wha leather rax and draw,
Of a' denominations,
Swith to the Laigh Kirk, ane and a',
And there tak up your stations;
Then aff to Begbie's † in a raw,
And pour divine libations
For joy this day.

Curst Common-sense, that imp o' hell,
Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder;‡
But Oliphant aft made her yell,
And Russel sair misca'd her;
This day M'Kindlay takes the flail,
And he's the boy will blaud her!
He'll clap a shangan on her tail,
And set the bairns to daud her
Wi' dirt this day.

beams of the moon, by which the wrath of the Genii of the *Brigs of Ayr* is appeased.

"Incongruous as the different parts of this poem are, it is not an incongruity that displeases, and we have only to regret that the poet did not bestow a little pains in making the figures more correct, and in smoothing the versification."—M.

* This is another of our poet's priest-skelping turns, and inferior to none of them in comic satire. The 6th stanza is exquisite in this way. But where there is so much good-humoured thrashing, comparisons are odious.—H.

† The principal inn was then kept by a person of this name.—M.

‡ Alluding to a scoffing ballad which was made on the admission of the late Reverend Mr Lindsay to the Laigh Kirk.

Mak haste and turn king David owre,
And lilt wi' holy clangor,
O' double verse come gie us four,
And skirl up the Bangor:
This day the Kirk kicks up a stoure,
Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
For Heresy is in her power,
And gloriously she'll whang her
Wi' pith this day.

Come, let a proper text be read,
And touch it aff wi' vigour,
How graceless Ham* leugh at his Dad,
Which made Canaan a nigger;
Or Phineas† drove the murd'ring blade,
Wi' whore-abhorring rigour;
Or Zipporah,‡ the scauldin jade,
Was like a bluidy tiger
I' th' inn that day.

There, try his mettle on the creed,
And bind him down wi' caution,
That Stipend is a carnal weed
He taks but for the fashion;
And gie him owre the flock to feed,
And punish each transgression;
Especial, rams that cross the breed,
Gie them sufficient threshin,
Spare them nae day.

Now auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
And toss thy horns fu' canty;
Nae mair thou'lt rowte out-owre the dale,
Because thy pasture's scanty;
For lapfu's large o' gospel kail
Shall fill thy crib in plenty,

* Gen. ix. 22. † Num. xxv. 8. ‡ Exod. iv. 25.

And runts o' grace the pick and wale
No gi'en by way o' dainty,
But ilka day.

Nae mair by Babel's streams we'll weep,
To think upon our Zion;
And hing our fiddles up to sleep,
Like baby-clouts a-dryin':
Come, screw the pegs wi' tunefu' cheep,
And o'er the thairms be tryin';
Oh, rare to see our elbucks wheep,
And a' like lamb-tails flyin'
Fu' fast this day!

Lang patronage, wi' rod o' airn,
Has shor'd the Kirk's undoin,
As lately Fenwick, sair forfairn,
Has proven to its ruin:
Our Patron, honest man! Glencairn,
He saw mischief was brewin;
And like a godly elect bairn
He's wal'd us out a true ane,
And sound this day.

Now Robertson, harangue nae mair,
But steek your gab for ever:
Or try the wicked town of Ayr,
For there they'll think you clever;
Or, nae reflection on your lear,
Ye may commence a shaver;
Or to the Netherton repair,
And turn a Carpet-weaver
Aff-hand this day.

Moodie and you were just a match,
We never had sic twa drones:

Auld Hornie did the Laigh Kirk watch,
Just like a winkin baudrons ;
And aye he catch'd the tither wretch,
To fry them in his caudrons :
But now his honour maun detach,
Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
Fast, fast, this day.

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes
She's swingein thro' the city ;
Hark how the nine-tail'd cat she plays !
I vow it's unco pretty :
There, Learning, with his Greekish face
Grunts out some Latin ditty ;
And Common-sense is gaun, she says,
To mak to Jamie Beattie
Her plaint this day.

But there's Morality himsel,
Embracing a' opinions :
Hear, how he gies the tither yell,
Between his twa companions ;
See, how she peels the skin and fell,
As ane were peelin onions !
Now there—they're packed aff to hell,
And banish'd our dominions,
Henceforth this day.

O happy day ! rejoice, rejoice !
Come bouse about the porter !
Morality's demure decoys
Shall here nae mair find quarter ;
M'Kindlay, Russel, are the boys,
That Heresy can torture :
They'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,
And cowe her measure shorter
By the head some day.

Come, bring the tither mutchkin in,
And here's, for a conclusion,
To every New Light* mother's son,
From this time forth, Confusion:
If mair they deave us wi' their din,
Or Patronage intrusion,
We'll light a spunk, and, every skin,
We'll rin them aff in fusion
Like oil some day.

THE CALF.†

TO THE REV. MR ——

On his Text, MALACHI, ch. iv. ver. 2.—"And ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall."

RIGHT Sir! your text I'll prove it true,
Though heretics may laugh;

* New Light was at this time a cant phrase in the West of Scotland, for those religious opinions which Dr Taylor of Norwich has so strenuously defended. If any one wishes to obtain a thorough knowledge of these opinions, let him read attentively President Edwards' 'Treatise on the Doctrine of Original Sin.'

In his specimens of the British Poets, Campbell remarks regarding Burns—"One point must be conceded to the strictures on his poetry to which I have already alluded, that his personal satire was fierce and acrimonious. I am not, however, disposed to consider his attack on *Rumble John* and *Holy Willie* as destitute of wit; and his poem on the clerical settlements at Kilmarnock, blends a good deal of ingenious metaphor with his accustomed humour. Even viewing him as a satirist, the last and humblest light in which he can be regarded as a poet, it may still be said of him—

His style was witty, though it had pure gall,
Something he might have mended—so may all."

M.

† This is too bad! If all the preachers of Scotland had such hearers what would become of many of them? These satirical lines are understood to refer to the late Rev. James Steven, minister of Kilwinning; and it is one of those pieces which the

For instance, there's yoursel just now,
God knows, an unco calf!

And should some Patron be so kind,
As bless you wi' a kirk,
I doubtna, Sir, but then we'll find,
Ye're still as great a stirk.

But, if the lover's raptur'd hour
Shall ever be your lot,
Forbid it, every heavenly Power,
You e'er should be a stot!

Tho', when some kind, connubial Dear,
Your butt-and-ben adorns,
The like has been that you may wear
A noble head of horns.

And in your lug, most reverend James,
To hear you roar and rowte,
Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
To rank amang the nowte.

And when ye're number'd wi' the dead,
Below a grassy hillock,
Wi' justice they may mark your head—
"Here lies a famous bullock!"

poet, at a later period of his life, regretted had ever been written. —H.

Mr Chambers informs us that in Mr Hamilton's house, which is occupied by his son, Mr Alexander Hamilton, in the same line of business, is shown the room in which Burns composed the satirical poem entitled the Calf. He had called upon Mr Hamilton on his way to church, and being desired by that gentleman to bring home a note of the text, produced on his return those clever but certainly over-severe and wicked verses.—M.

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.*

O Prince! O Chief of many throned Pow'rs,
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war.
MILTON.

I.

O THOU! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern grim and sootie,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches!

II.

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
And let poor damned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
E'en to a deil,
To skelp and scaud poor dogs like me,
And hear us squeel!

* This has always been a great favourite with the country people, and deservedly so. The two first verses are quite inimitable. *Spairges* is the best Scots word in its place I ever saw. An Englishman can have no idea of the ludicrous image it conveys. The Deil is not standing flinging the liquid brimstone on his friends with a ladle, but we see him standing at a large boiling vat, with something like a golf-bat, striking the liquid this way and that way aslant with all his might, making it fly through the whole apartment, while the inmates are winking and holding up their arms to defend their faces. This is precisely the idea conveyed by *spairging*; flinging it in any other way would be *laving* or splashing.—H.

This poem has been very cleverly illustrated by Mr Thomas Landseer, accompanied with explanatory notes, many of them excellent, and displaying much critical acumen. Of some of these notes we have availed ourselves, subjoining them to the stanzas to which they apply:—

III.

Great is thy pow'r, and great thy fame;
Far kenn'd and noted is thy name;
And tho' yon lowing heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
And faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.

IV.

Whyles ranging like a roaring lion,
For prey, a' holes and corners tryin';
Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin
Tirling the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin',
Unseen thou lurks.

V.

I've heard my reverend Grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or whare auld ruin'd castles, gray,
Nod to the moon,

STANZAS III. IV.—"This stanza and the following are not the only ones of the poem in which Burns has contrived to blend severe moral truths with glimpses of local scenery, and snatches of careless merriment. May we entreat the Southron reader, who has hitherto been deterred from perusing the poetry of Burns, by his provincialisms, to consider the powerful strain of true poetry, which pervades this fourth stanza."

STANZA V.—"This stanza is picturesque and full of interest. The variety of the detail is in good keeping with that garrulous minuteness which is the universal privilege of grandmothers. Would that all reverend 'grannies' were, moreover, as poetical in their relations as this lady. It is at this part of the Address that we begin to recognise the master hand with which Burns has touched the scenery of the Highlands, the moors, and lochs, and mountains. The wild and lonely places, the unearthly noises, the bewildering mists, the yet more deceptive 'wild fires dancing o'er the heath;' all of these are etchings, light, indeed, but touched with the fidelity of a keen and minute observer of nature."

Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon.

VI.

When twilight did my Grannie summon,
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin', thro' the boortries comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

VII.

Ae drearie, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough,
Ye, like a rash-bush stood in sight
Wi' waving sough.

STANZAS VI. VII. VIII.—"Burns may have been but little versed in the philosophy of life; many well disposed persons are fond of citing his case as one of the thousand, in which the ablest men of genius have shown themselves the most untutored men in the world. The fact may be so: but we are confident that our poet perfectly understood much of the philosophy of mind. In these stanzas, he has touched, with a nice and accurate pencil, one of those foibles common to our moral nature, which require the most delicate handling. He intimates, with mingled archness and simplicity, that the good old woman never suspected that the noises which she heard MIGHT be that hum of insects which she *thought* it so much resembled, above the waters of the loch,—or the motion of a frightened bird whirring through the elder bushes. This propensity to attribute natural effects to supernatural causes, is one of the best known and least intelligible phænomena of the human mind. We are always rejecting the evidence of our senses, to tamper with the imaginary evidence supplied by analogous reasoning upon mere abstract principles. The good wife never dreamed of referring her alarms to the natural objects around her. A humming drone, at twilight, by the waters, a rustling in the leaves of the trees about her cottage—if these did not bespeak the presence of the Devil, what the d—l else could they indicate!

"Thus our poet proceeds to tell us, that beyond the same loch,

VIII.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch stour, quaick—quaick—
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd, like a drake,
On whistling wings.

IX.

Let warlocks grim, and wither'd hags,
Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs, and dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
Owre howkit dead.

X

Thence country wives, wi' toil and pain,
May plunge and plunge the kirn in vain;
For, oh! the yellow treasure's ta'en
By witching skill;
And dawtit, twal-pint Hawkie's gane
As yell's the Bill.

XI.

Thence mystic knots mak great abuse,
On young Guidman, fond, keen, and crouse;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,

he himself had had a visible encounter with something, LIKE, indeed, to a *bush of rushes*, waving and shaking in the wind; and after an admirable description of the emotions of fear by which he was oppressed, he incidentally mentions that the Great Unknown did, certainly, with an abrupt and hasty flight take away like a drake; but even the appropriate note of the fluttering fowl never once awakened his suspicion, that it might be a fowl proper, and not the foul fiend!"

Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.*

XII.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
And float the jinglin icy-boord,
Then Water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction,
And nighted trav'llers are allur'd,
To their destruction.

* Burns' mind was stored with the superstitions contained in the ancient song and traditions of Scotland. The way in which witch knots operated on the fair sex, may be seen by consulting the ballad of "Willie's ladye," given in the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.

Syne Willy's loosed the nine witch knots,
That were amang that ladye's locks;
And Willy's ta'en out the kaims o' care
That were into that ladye's hair;
And he's ta'en down the bush o' woodbine,
Hung atween her lover and the witch carline.

And he has kill'd the master kid
That ran beneath that ladye's bed;
And he has loosed her left foot shee, (shoe)
And latten that ladye lighter be;
And now he has gotten a bonny son,
And meikle grace be him upon. M.

STANZA XII.—"The disruption occasioned by a thaw, and the noise of the fragments of ice sliding over one another, are happily described here. No opportunity seems more fitting for the intervention of the mischievous Kelpies, whom our northern superstitions imagine to be delighted with the last agonies of drowning men and despairing mariners, than the uproar of waters and icy masses, the tides, and the winds, all in angry collision, and the raging of the elements outroaring the delirious cries of human terror. It is not twenty years since the piercing shrieks and supplications for help, of a passage-boat's company, which had been landed on a sandbank, at low water, in the Solway Frith, instead of on the Cumberland coast; and who found, as the moon rose and the haze dispersed, that they were in mid-channel, with a strong tide setting fast in upon them, were mistaken by the people, both on the Scotch and English shores, for the wailings of

XIII.

And aft your moss-traversing Spunkies
Decoy the wight that late and drunk is:
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkeys
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

XIV.

When Masons' mystic word and grip,
In storms and tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest Brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell!

XV.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonnie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
And all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry swaird,
In shady bow'r:*

Kelpies! The consequence was, that the unhappy people (whose boat had drifted from them before their fatal error was discovered) were all drowned; though nothing had been easier, but for the rooted superstition of their neighbours ashore, than to have effectually succoured them."

* This verse ran originally thus:—

Lang syne in Eden's happy scene,
When strappin Adam's days were green,
And Eve was like my bonnie Jean,
My dearest part,
A dancin', sweet, young handsome quean,
Wi' guileless heart. M.

STANZAS XV. XVI.—"In these stanzas, the transition is so startling, and yet so beautiful, that we are reminded of those early Italian poets who delighted themselves and their readers by abrupt and striking alternations from the burlesque to the pathetic; from the heroic to the humorous; and the Ayrshire bard has the

XVI.

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing dog!
Ye came to Paradise incog.
And play'd on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be your fa!)
And gied the infant warld a shog,*
'Maist ruin'd a'.

XVII.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reekit dugs, and reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smoutie phiz
'Mang better fo'k,
And sklented on the man of Uz
Your spitefu' joke?

XVIII.

And how ye gat him' i' your thrall,
And brak him out o' house and hall,
While scabs and blotches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw,
And lows'd his ill-tongu'd, wicked Scawl
Was warst ava?

decided advantage of accomplishing the same end with less apparent effort and premeditation than his gifted predecessors. Is it possible to condense within the compass of four or five lines a more charming sketch of an infant world, a newly created race of beings, a state of existence serene, blissful, and contented; a condition of society unalloyed by vice or misery, want or pain? And with how much effect does the delicious repose of this picture prepare us for the fatal reverse which follows, by the introduction of the fell destroyer, who 'maist ruin'd a'.'—Where the subject is felt so deeply, it is almost difficult to deprecate the tone, somewhat too light, in which the poet has chosen to treat it."

* *Shog* is another of those singularly happy expressions formerly alluded to.—H.

XIX.

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares and fechtin fierce,
Sin' that day Michael* did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a' Lallan tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.†

XX.

And now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,

* Vide Milton, Book vi.

STANZA XIX.—"If we might fairly expect that the catalogue of all the Devil's doings, subsequent to the affair hinted at in the text, could have been continued with equal fidelity and spirit, we might have regretted that this Address was not prolonged accordingly. But Burns has evidently formed a just estimate of the length and difficulty of such an undertaking:—and only think to what an extent must our commentary have run! The reader may congratulate himself that things are as they are. He ought to turn *optimist*, and acknowledge that 'all is for the best.'"

† The following three verses from the Author's poem, addressed to Colonel de Peyster, would have made a very appropriate addition here to this poem:—

Ah Nick! ah Nick, it is na fair,
First showing us the tempting ware,
Bright wines and bonnie lasses rare,
To put us daft;
Syne weave unseen thy spider's snare
O' hell's damn'd waft.

Poor man, the flie, aft bizzes by,
And aft as chance he comes thee nigh,
Thy auld damn'd elbow yeuks wi' joy,
And hellish pleasure;
Already in thy fancy's eye,
Thy sicker treasure.

Soon heels o'er gowdie! in he gangs,
And like a sheep-head on a tangs,
Thy girning laugh enjoys his pangs
And murdering wrestle,
As dangling in the wind he hangs
A gibbet's tassel.

Some luckless hour will send him linkin,
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,
And cheat you yet.

XXI.

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought and men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake! *

STANZA XXI.—"There is about this parting admonition a touch of human pity, which was evidently the spontaneous ebullition, perhaps the unconscious one, of 'a kind and sympathising nature; for precisely such a nature was Burns's. The exhortation to amendment, the suggestion of a happier fate as the result of that amendment, and the commiseration expressed for the Arch-enemy of man, present, in this stanza, a moral lesson which would not have disgraced a graver preacher, a holier theme, or a more solemn occasion."

* The chief felicities of this poem are well discriminated by Dr Currie in his life of Burns. "Of this union of humour with the higher powers of imagination, many instances may be found in the poem entitled *Death and Dr Hornbook*, and in almost every stanza of the *Address to the Deil*, one of the happiest of his productions. After reproaching this terrible being with all his 'doings' and misdeeds, in the course of which he passes through a series of Scottish superstitions, and rises at times into a high strain of poetry; he concludes this address delivered in a tone of great familiarity, not altogether unmixed with apprehension, in the following words:—

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought and men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

Humour and tenderness are here so happily intermixed, that it is impossible to say which preponderates."—M.

THE

DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE.*

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

As Mailie, and her lambs thegither,
Were ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
And owre she warsled in the ditch:
There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
When Hughoc† he cam doytin by.

Wi' glowrin een, and lifted han's,
Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's:
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, waes my heart! he could na mend it!

* Here again is simple nature itself. It is on this strain that I like Burns best, he can mix the true comic and pathetic so happily. I know of no two lines that ever affected me more, than the reasons annexed to one of poor Mailie's injunctions to her two orphan lambs.

Then wives will gie them bits o' bread,
And bairns greet for them when they're dead.

I need only add that poor Mailie was a real character, and the author's only pet yowe indeed; that she twisted herself in the tether one day, and over she *warsled* into the ditch. Hugh the herd boy never thought of lifting her, but went gaping and told his story to Burns; and there is little doubt that when he was running to save her, the hapless situation of her two lambs, left motherless on his hand, had forcibly struck him. Mailie long survived her death and dying words. This poem was composed before 1784. In his interesting recollections of his brother's writings, Gilbert Burns says, that after poor Mailie was set to rights, and when he and the poet returned from the plough in the evening, the latter repeated her *Death and Dying words* pretty much in the way they now stand.—H.

† A neebor herd-callan.

He gaped wide, but naething spak;
At length poor Mailie silence brak.

"O thou, whase lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
My dying words attentive hear,
And bear them to my master dear.

"Tell him if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep,
O, bid him never tie them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
And let them wander at their will:
So may his flock increase, and grow
To scores o' lambs, and packs o' woo'!

"Tell him, he was a master kin',
And aye was guid to me and mine;
And now my dying charge I gie him,
My helpless lambs I trust them wi' him.

"O, bid him save their harmless lives,
Frae dogs, and tods, and butchers' knives!
But gie them guid cow milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel;
And tent them duly, e'en and morn,
Wi' teats o' hay, and ripps o' corn.

"And may they never learn the gates
Of ither vile, wanrestfu' pets!
To slink thro' slaps, and reave and steal,
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail.
So may they, like their great forbears,
For monie a year come thro' the sheers;
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
And bairns greet for them when they're dead.

" My poor toop-lamb, my son and heir,
O, bid him breed him up wi' care!
And if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast!
And warn him, what I winna name,
To stay content wi' yowes at hame;
And no to rin and wear his cloots,
Like ither menseless, graceless, brutes.

" And niest my yowie, silly thing,
Gude keep thee frae a tether string!
O, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' ony blastit, moorland toop;
But aye keep mind to moop and mell
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel'!

" And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath
I lea'e my blessin wi' you baith:
And when ye think upo' your mither,
Mind to be kind to ane another.

" Now, honest Hughoc, dinna fail
To tell my master a' my tale;
And bid him burn this cursed tether,
And, for thy pains, thou'se get my blether."

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
And closed her een amang the dead.

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.*

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose;
Our Bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;
The last sad cape-stane of his woes;
Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our Bardie, dowie, wear
The mourning weed;
He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the toun she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
And could behave hersel wi' mense:
I'll say't, she never brak a fence,
Thro' thievish greed.
Our Bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' Mailie's dead.

* A very elegant morsel, and which brings one in mind of Skinner's *Ewie wi' the crooked horn*, a very original and excellent song.—H.

But the prototype of this popular species of versification, is to be found in Sempill's 'Life and death of the Piper of Kilbarchan,' and he probably borrowed from an earlier model.—M.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her living image in her yowe,
Comes bleating to him, owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread;
And down the briny pearls rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
Wi' tawted ket, and hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships,
Frae yont the Tweed;
A bonnier fleesh near cross'd the clips
Than Mailie dead.*

Wae worth that man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie thing—a raip!
It maks guid fellows girn and gape,
Wi' chokin dread;
And Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape
For Mailie dead.

O a' ye Bards on bonnie Doon!
And wha on Ayr your chanters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed!
His heart will never get aboon
His Mailie dead.

* This verse ran originally thus:—

She was nae get o' runted rams,
Wi' woo like goats, and legs like trams;
She was the flower o' Fairlee lambs,
A famous breed;
Now Robin, sichin', chows the hams
O' Mailie dead.

It were a pity that the 'Fairlee lambs' should lose the honour once intended for them.—M.

TO JAMES SMITH.*

Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society!
I owe thee much!——— BLAIR.

DEAR Smith, the sleest, pawkie thief,
That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef
Owre human hearts;
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun and moon,
And every star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair o' shoon,
Just gaun to see you:
And every ither pair that's done,
Mair ta'en I'm wi' you.

That auld capricious carlin, Nature,
To mak amends for scrimpit stature,
She's turn'd you aff a human creature
On her first plan,
And in her freaks on every feature,
She's wrote, "The Man."

Just now I've ta'en the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie noddle's working prime,
My fancy yerkit up sublime
Wi' hasty summon;

* The individual to whom this poem was addressed was a merchant in Mauchline, and, like that of the poet, his lot was chequered and hard. Finding Mauchline as ungenial as the poet found Mossgiel, he repaired to the neighbourhood of Linlithgow, where he became a calico-printer; but, failing in business, he left his native land; and found—what Burns narrowly escaped—a grave in the West Indies. Another letter to him will be found in the prose correspondence of our author.—M.

Hae ye a leisure moment's time
To hear what's comin?

Some rhyme a neebor's name to lash;
Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash;
Some rhyme to court the country clash,
And raise a din;
For me, an aim I never fash:
I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the russet coat,
And damn'd my fortune to the groat;
But in requit,
Has blest me wi' a random shot
O' country wit.

This while my notion's ta'en a sklent,
To try my fate in guid, black prent;
But still the mair I'm that way bent,
Something cries, "Hoolie!
I red you, honest man, tak tent!
Ye'll shaw your folly.

"There's ither poets, much your betters,
Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,
Hae thought they had insur'd their debtors,
A' future ages:
Now moths deform in shapeless tatters,
Their unknown pages."

Then fareweel hopes o' laurel boughs,
To garland my poetic brows!
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistling thrang,
And teach the lanely heights and howes
My rustic sang.

I'll wander on, with tentless heed
How never-halting moments speed.

Till fate shall snap the brittle thread;
Then, all unknown,
I'll lay me with th' inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone!

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we're living sound and hale,
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave care owre side!
And large, before enjoyment's gale,
Let's tak the tide.

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy land,
Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic wand then let us wield;
For, ance that five-and-forty's speel'd,
See crazy, weary, joyless eild,
Wi' wrinkled face,
Comes hostin, hirplin owre the field,
Wi' creepin pace.

When ance life's day draws near the gloamin,
Then fareweel vacant careless roamin;
And fareweel chearfu' tankards foamin,
And social noise;
And fareweel dear deluding woman,
The joy of joys!

O Life! how pleasant in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scorning,
We frisk away,

Like school-boys, at the expected warning,
To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves;
And tho' the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flowery spat,
For which they never toil'd nor swat,
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain;
And, haply, eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim, some Fortune chase;
Keen Hope does every sinew brace;
Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
And seize the prey:
Then cannie, in some cozie place,
They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan',
Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin;
To right or left, eternal swervin,
They zig-zag on;
Till curst with age, obscure and starvin,
They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil and straining—
But truce with peevish, poor complaining!
Is Fortune's fickle Luna waning?
E'en let her gang!
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, "Ye Powers!" and warm implore,
"Tho' I should wander terra o'er,
In all her climes,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Aye rowth o' rhymes.

Gie dreeping roasts to country lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards
Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards,
And maids of honour;
And yill and whisky gie to cairds,
Until they scunner.

A title, Dempster merits it;
A garter gie to Willie Pitt;
Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
In cent. per cent.,
But give me real, sterling wit,
And I'm content.

While ye are pleas'd to keep me hale,
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't water-brose, or muslin-kail,
Wi' cheerfu' face,
As lang's the muses dinna fail
To say the grace."

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behint my lug, or by my nose;
I jouk beneath misfortune's blows,
As weel's I may;
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye douce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool,

Compar'd wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives, a dyke!

Nae hair-brain'd sentimental traces
In your unletter'd, nameless faces!
In arioso trills and graces
Ye never stray,
But gravissimo, solemn basses
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise,
Nae ferly tho' ye do despise
The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
The rattlin squad;
I see you upward cast your eyes—
Ye ken the road.

Whilst I—but I shall haud me there—
Wi' you I'll scarce gang ony where—
Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
But quat my sang,
Content wi' you to mak a pair,
Whare'er I gang.*

* We subjoin here the following happy and appropriate remarks from the pen of 'The Man of Feeling.'—"The power of genius is not less admirable in tracing the manners than in painting the passions, or in drawing the scenery of nature. That intuitive glance with which a writer like Shakspeare discerns the characters of men, with which he catches the many changing hues of life, forms a sort of problem in the science of mind, of which it is easier to see the truth than to assign the cause. Though I am very far from meaning to compare our rustic bard to Shakspeare, yet whoever will read (this and) his (other) lighter and more humorous poems, his *Dialogue of the Dogs*, his 'Dedication to G. H., Esq.,' his 'Epistle to a young friend,' and 'to W. S—n,' will perceive with what uncommon penetration and sagacity this Heaven-taught ploughman, from his humble and unlettered station, has looked upon men and manners."—M.

A DREAM.

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the statute blames with reason;
But surely dreams were ne'er indicted treason.

[ON reading, in the public papers, the Laureat's Ode, with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the birth-day levee; and in his dreaming fancy, made the following Address.]

GUID-MORNIN to your Majesty!
May heaven augment your blisses,
On every new birth-day ye see,
A humble poet* wishes!
My bardship here, at your levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Amang the birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

I see ye're complimented thrang,
By monie a lord and lady;
"God save the king!" 's a cuckoo sang
That's unco easy said aye;
The poets, too, a venal gang,
Wi' rhymes weel-turn'd and ready,
Wad gar you trow ye ne'er do wrang,
But aye unerring steady,
On sic a day.

For me! before a monarch's face,
Ev'n there I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:
So, nae reflection on your grace,
Your kingship to bespatter;

* In the first edition for Poet the reading was "Bardie."—M.

There's monie waur been o' the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

'Tis very true, my sovereign king,
My skill may weel be doubted:
But facts are chiels that winna ding,
And downa be disputed:
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft and clouted,
And now the third part of the string,
And less, will gang about it
Then did ae day.*

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation!
But faith! I muckle doubt, my Sire,
Ye've trusted ministration
To chaps, wha, in a barn, or byre
Wad better fill their station
Than courts yon day.

And now ye've gien auld Britain peace,
Her broken shins to plaister;
Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester;
For me, thank God, my life's a lease,
Nae bargain wearing faster,
Or, faith! I fear, that wi' the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

* The poet alludes here to the immense curtailment of the British dominions which took place only three years before the writing of this poem, viz. at the close of the American war, when, by the treaties of 1783, the independence of the thirteen United States was acknowledged, and the extensive territory of Louisiana, acquired by the treaty of 1763, was again restored to Spain.—M.

I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
When taxes he enlarges,
(And Will's a true guid fellow's get,
A name not envy spairges),
That he intends to pay your debt,
And lessen a' your charges;
But, God-sake! let nae saving fit
Abridge your bonnie barges
And boats this day.

Adieu, my Liege! may Freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
And may ye rax Corruption's neck,
And gie her for dissection!
But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your Queen, with due respect,
My fealty and subjection
This great Birth-day.

Hail, Majesty Most Excellent!
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment
A simple poet* gies ye?
Thae bonnie bairntime, Heav'n has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

For you, young potentate o' Wales,
I tell your Highness fairly,
Down Pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I'm tauld ye're driving rarely;

* 'Bardie' in Kilmarnock edition.

But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
And curse your folly sairly,
That e'er ye brak Diana's pales,
Or rattled dice wi' Charlie,
By night or day.

Yet aft a ragged cowte's been known
To mak a noble aiver;
So, ye may doucely fill a throne,
For a' their clishmaclaver;
There, him* at Agincourt wha shone,
Few better were or braver;
And yet, wi' funny queer Sir John,†
He was an unco shaver
For monie a day.

For you, right rev'rend Osnaburg,‡
Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
Altho' a ribbon at your lug
Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon paughty dog
That bears the keys of Peter,
Then, swith! and get a wife to hug,
Or, troth! ye'll stain the mitre
Some luckless day.

Young, royal Tarry Breeks,§ I learn,
Ye've lately come athwart her;
A glorious galley‖ stem and stern,
Weel rigg'd for Venus barter;
But first hang out, that she'll discern
Your hymeneal charter,

* King Henry V. † Sir John Falstaff, *vide* Shakspeare.
‡ The Duke of York. § Duke of Clarence, now William IV.
‖ Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain royal sailor's amour.

Then heave aboard your grapple airn,
And, large upon her quarter,
Come full that day

Ye, lastly, bonnie blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heaven mak you guid as weel as braw,
And gie you lads a plenty:
But sneer nae British boys awa',
For kings are unco scant aye;
And German gentles are but sma',
They're better just than want aye
On onie day.

God bless you a'! consider now,
Ye're unco muckle dautit;
But, ere the course o' life be through
It may be bitter sautit;
And I hae seen their cogie fou,
That yet hae tarrow't at it;
But or the day was done, I trow,
The laggen they hae clautit
Fu' clean that day.

THE VISION.*

DUAN FIRST.†

The sun had clos'd the winter day,
The curlers quat their roaring play,
And hunger'd maukin ta'en her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she has been.

The thresher's weary flingin tree
The lee-lang day had tired me;
And whan the day had closed his e'e,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the spence, right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,
I sat and ey'd the spewing reek,
That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeek,
The auld clay biggin;
And heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin.

All in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mus'd on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
And done nae-thing,
But stringin blethers up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

* This is one of the most artificial poems of Burns' composition. It is in many places, however, highly poetical, and the appreciation of his own character is peculiarly striking.—H.

† *Duan*, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem. See his Cath-Loda, vol. ii. of M'Pherson's translation.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank and clarkit
My cash-account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

I started, mutt'ring, blockhead! coof!
And heav'd on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I, henceforth, would be rhyme-proof
Till my last breath—

When click! the string the sneck did draw;
And jee! the door gaed to the wa';
And by my ingle-lowe I saw,
Now bleezin bright,
A tight, outlandish hizzie, braw
Come full in sight.

Ye needna doubt, I held my whisht;
The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht;
I glower'd as eerie's I'd been dusht
In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest worth, she blusht,
And stepped ben.

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs
Were twisted, gracefu' round her brows;
I took her for some Scottish Muse,
By that same token;
And come to stop those reckless vows,
Would soon been broken.

A 'hair-brained, sentimental trace,'
Was strongly marked in her face;

A wildly-witty rustic grace
Shone full upon her;
Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
Beam'd keen with honour.

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scrimply seen;
And such a leg! my bonnie Jean*
Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight, and clean,
Nane else cam near it.

Her mantle large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
Deep lights and shades, bold mingling, threw
A lustre grand;
And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
A well known land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
There, mountains to the skies were tost:
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
With surging foam;
There, distant shone Art's lofty boast,
The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods
There, well-fed Irwine stately thuds:
Auld hermit Ayr staw thro' his woods,
On to the shore;

* This line in the Kilmarnock edition, 1786, ran thus: 'And such a *leg* / my Bess, I ween.' .This girl was servant to the poet's mother at Mossgiel, and by her he had his 'illegitimate child,' to whom allusion is made in 'The Inventory,' and whom in another poem he styles 'sweet image o' my bonny Betty.'—M.

And many a lesser torrent scuds,
With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient borough rear'd her head;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race,
To every nobler virtue bred,
And polish'd grace.*

By stately tower or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
I could discern;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race† heroic wheel,
And brandish round the deep-dy'd steel
In sturdy blows;
While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
Their Southron foes.

His COUNTRY'S SAVIOUR,‡ mark him well;
Bold Richardton's§ heroic swell;
The chief on Sark‖ who glorious fell,
In high command;

* With this stanza the first Duan in the Kilmarnock edition terminates. The subsequent stanzas were added in the Edinburgh editions.—M.

† The Wallaces.

‡ William Wallace.

§ Adam Wallace, of Richardton, (Riccarton,) cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish independence.

‖ Wallace, laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas, Earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought anno 1448. That glorious victory was

And he whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

'There, where a sceptred Pictish shade*
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race, portray'd
In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd
They strode along.

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove,†
Near many a hermit-fancy'd cove,
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love)
In musing mood,
An aged Judge, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

With deep-struck reverential awe‡
The learned sire and son I saw,
To Nature's God and Nature's law
They gave their lore,
This, all its source and end to draw,
That, to adore.

Brydon's brave ward§ I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye;

principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valour of the gallant Laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action.

* Coilus, king of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family seat of the Montgomeries of Coilsfield, where his burial place is still shown.

† Barskimming, the seat of the late Lord Justice Clerk. (Miller.)

‡ Catrine, the seat of the late Doctor, and late Professor Stewart.

§ The late Colonel Fullarton, of Fullarton.

Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a patriot-name on high,
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

With musing deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heav'nly seeming fair;
A whisp'ring throb did witness bear,
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder sister's air
She did me greet.

"All hail! my own inspired bard!
In me thy native muse regard!
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low!
I come to give thee such reward
As we bestow.

"Know, the great genius of this land
Has many a light, aerial band,
Who, all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously,
As arts or arms they understand
Their labours ply.

"They Scotia's race among them share;
Some fire the soldier on to dare;
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
Corruption's heart:
Some teach the bard, a darling care,
The tuneful art.

"Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They, ardent, kindling spirits pour;

Or, 'mid the venal senate's roar,
They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest patriot-lore,
And grace the hand.

"And when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild poetic rage
In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.*

"Hence Fullarton, the brave and young;
Hence Dempster's zeal-inspired tongue;
Hence sweet harmonious Beattie sung
His 'Minstrel lays;'
Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
The sceptic's bays.

"To lower orders are assign'd
The humbler ranks of human kind,
The rustic Bard, the lab'ring Hind,
The Artisan;
All choose, as various they're inclin'd,
The various man.

"When yellow waves the heavy grain,
The threat'ning storm some strongly rein;
Some teach to meliorate the plain,
With tillage-skill;
And some instruct the shepherd-train,
Blithe o'er the hill.

"Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile;

* In the first edition this stanza does not appear.

Some soothe the lab'rer's weary toil,
For humble gains,
And make his cottage scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

"Some, bounded to a district space,
Explore at large man's infant race,
To mark the embryotic trace
Of rustic Bard;
And careful note each op'ning grace,
A guide and guard.

"Of these am I—Coila my name;
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells,* chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r:
I mark'd thy embryo tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

"With future hope, I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely caroll'd, chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes,
Fir'd at the simple, artless lays
Of other times.

"I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the north his fleecy store
Drove thro' the sky,
I saw grim nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

"Or when the deep green mantled earth
Warm cherish'd every flow'ret's birth,

* Of Loudon, for long time hereditary sheriffs of Ayrshire. H.

And joy and music pouring forth
In every grove,
I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
With boundless love.

"When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,
Call'd forth the reaper's rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their evening joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In pensive walk.

"When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adored Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To soothe thy flame.*

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor ray,
By Passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from heaven.

"I taught thy manners-painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains,
Till now, o'er all my wide domains
Thy fame extends;

* This and the four preceding stanzas are quoted by Mackenzie in his notice of Burns, inserted in the Lounger, No. 97, as displaying in a remarkable degree "a high tone of feeling, a power and energy of expression, particularly and strongly characteristic of the mind and the voice of the poet. Of strains like the above, solemn and sublime, with that rapt and inspired melancholy in which the poet lifts his eye 'above this visible diurnal sphere,' the poems entitled, '*Despondency*,' the '*Lament*,' '*Winter a Dirge*,' and the Invocation to '*Ruin*,' afford no less striking examples."—M.

And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
Become thy friends.

"Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape glow;
Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
With Shenstone's art;
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

"Yet all beneath th' unrivall'd rose,
The lowly daisy sweetly blows:
Tho' large the forest's monarch throws
His army shade,
Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
Adown the glade.

"Then never murmur nor repine;
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;
And trust me, not Potosi's mine,
Nor kings' regard,
Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,
A rustic Bard.

"To give my counsels all in one,
Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;
Preserve the Dignity of Man,
With soul erect:
And trust, the Universal Plan
Will all protect.

"And wear thou this"—she solemn said,
And bound the Holly round my head;
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID,*

OR

THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them aye thegither:
The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
The Rigid Wise anither;
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.

SOLOMON.—Eccles. ch. vii. ver. 16.

O YE wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebor's faults and folly!
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supply'd wi' store o' water,
The heapet happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As Counsel for poor mortals,
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
For glaikit Folly's portals;
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences,

* Burns has written more from his own heart and his own feelings than any other poet, of which this poem is an instance. With the secret fountains of passion in the human soul he was well acquainted, and deeply versed in their mysteries. The two last verses are above all praise.—H.

Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
  Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
  And shudder at the niffer,
But cast a moment's fair regard,
  What maks the mighty differ;
Discount what scant occasion gave
  That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
  Your better art o' hiding.

Think, when your castigated pulse
  Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
  That still eternal gallop;
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
  Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
  It maks an unco lee-way.

See social life and glee sit down,
  All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmugrify'd, they're grown
  Debauchery and drinking:
O would they stay to calculate
  Th' eternal consequences;
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
  Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
  Ty'd up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor frailty names,
  Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,
  A treacherous inclination—
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
  Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human;
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us,
He knows each chord—its various tone,
Each spring—its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

TAM SAMSON'S ELEGY.*†

An honest man's the noblest work of God.
POPE.

HAS auld Kilmarnock seen the deil?
Or great M'Kindlay‡ thrawn his heel?
Or Robertson§ again grown weel,
To preach and read?
"Na, waur than a'!" cries ilka chiel,
"Tam Samson's dead!"

* When this worthy old sportsman went out last muirfowl season, he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase, "the last of his fields;" and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried in the muirs. On this hint the author composed his elegy and epitaph.

† This has always been a great country favourite. From twenty to thirty years ago, you could not have met a lad or boy in Scotland, who could not have rhymed over to you Tam Samson's Elegy. I cannot resist pointing out some of those peculiarly happy expressions here, which tend to give the poems of Burns their zest.

"Death's gien the lodge an unco devel."

It is impossible for any expression to exceed this; the picture of the curling too is excellent.

"And eels weel ken'd for souple tail."

I never heard any body read or repeat this without laughing; it is so simply characteristic.

"Ye maukins, cock your fuds fu' braw,"

Is in the same manner descriptive; we actually see the hare flinging up her short tail in the most disdainful way.

"In vain the burns came down like waters
An acre braid."

What a picture of a flooded burn! Any other poet would have given us long descriptions of all these. Burns dashes it down at once in a style so graphic, no one can mistake it.

"Perhaps upon his mouldering breast
"Some spitefu' moorfowl bigs her nest."

Match that sentence who can. H.

‡ A certain preacher, a great favourite with the million. Vide the Ordination, stanza II.

§ Another preacher, an equal favourite with the few, who was at that time ailing. For him see also the Ordination, stanza IX.

Kilmarnock lang may grunt and grane,
And sigh, and sab, and greet her lane,
And cleed her bairns, man, wife, and wean,
In mourning weed;
To death, she's dearly paid the kane,
Tam Samson's dead!

The brethren of the mystic level
May hing their head in woefu' bevel,
While by their nose the tears will revel,
Like ony bead;
Death's gien the lodge an unco devel,
Tam Samson's dead!

When winter muffles up his cloak,
And binds the mire like a rock;
When to the loughs the Curlers flock,
Wi' gleesome speed;
Wha will they station at the cock?
Tam Samson's dead!

He was the king o' a' the core,
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore,
Or up the rink like Jehu roar
In time of need;
But now he lags on death's hog-score,
Tam Samson's dead!

Now safe the stately sawmont sail,
And trouts bedropp'd wi' crimson hail,
And eels weel ken'd for souple tail,
And geds for greed,
Since dark in death's fish-creel we wail,
Tam Samson's dead!

Rejoice, ye birring paitricks a';
Ye cootie moorcocks, crously craw;

Ye maukins, cock your fud fu' braw,
Withouten dread:
Your mortal fae is now awa',
Tam Samson's dead;

That woefu' morn be ever mourn'd,
Saw him in shootin graith adorn'd,
While pointers round impatient burn'd,
Frae couples freed;
But, och! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
Tam Samson's dead!

In vain auld age his body batters;
In vain the gout his ancles fetters;
In vain the burns came down like waters,
An acre braid!
Now ev'ry auld wife, greetin, clatters,
Tam Samson's dead!

Owre mony a weary hag he limpit,
And aye the tither shot he thumpit,
Till coward death behind him jumpit
Wi' deadly feide;
Now he proclaims, wi' tout o' trumpet,
Tam Samson's dead!

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
He reel'd his wonted bottle swagger,
But yet he drew the mortal trigger
Wi' weel-aim'd heed;
"Lord, five!" he cry'd, and owre did stagger;
Tam Samson's dead!

Ilk hoary hunter mourn'd a brither;
Ilk sportsman youth bemoan'd a father;
Yon auld gray stane, amang the heather,
Marks out his head,
Whare Burns has wrote, in rhyming blether,
Tam Samson's dead!

There low he lies, in lasting rest;
Perhaps upon his mould'ring breast
Some spitefu' muirfowl bigs her nest,
To hatch and breed;
Alas! nae mair he'll them molest!
Tam Samson's dead!

When August winds the heather wave,
And sportsmen wander by yon grave,
Three volleys let his mem'ry crave
O' pouther an' lead,
Till Echo answer frae her cave,
Tam Samson's dead!

Heav'n rest his saul, whare'er he be!
Is th' wish o' mony mae than me;
He had twa faults, or may be three,
Yet what remead?
Ae social honest man want we:
Tam Samson's dead!

THE EPITAPH *

Tam Samson's weel-worn clay here lies,
Ye canting zealots, spare him!
If honest worth in heaven rise,
Ye'll mend or ye win near him.

PER CONTRA.

Go, fame, and canter like a filly
Thro' a' the streets and neuks o' Killie,†
Tell every social, honest billie
To cease his grievin,
For yet, unskaith'd by death's gleg gullie,
Tam Samson's livin.

* This elegy was placed over the hero's grave in Kilmarnock church-yard. He died many years after it was written, having outlived Burns.—M.

† Killie is a phrase the country-folks sometimes use for Kilmarnock.

HALLOWEEN.*†

[The following Poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the West of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity, makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the author with the perusal, to see the remains of it among the more unenlightened in our own.]

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.—GOLDSMITH.

UPON that night, when fairies light,
On Cassilis Downans ‡ dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colean the route is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams;
There up the cove, § to stray and rove
Amang the rocks and streams,
To sport that night.

* Is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings, are all abroad on their baneful, midnight errands; particularly those aerial people, the fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary.

† This poem is a great favourite, both with the general reader and the critic. Hazlitt says, "The 'Halloween' is a most striking and picturesque description of local customs and scenery." It exhibits a highly humorous and masterly description of some of the most remarkable superstitions of the Scottish peasantry; and the incidents are selected, and the characters discriminated, with great felicity.—M.

‡ Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis.

§ A noted cavern near Colean-house, called the Cove of Colean; which, as Cassilis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt of fairies.

Amang the bonnie winding banks,
Where Doon rins, wimplin, clear,
Where Bruce* ance rul'd the martial ranks,
And shook his Carrick spear,
Some merry, friendly, country folks,
Together did convene,
To burn their nits, and pou their stocks,
And haud their Halloween,
Fu' blithe that night.

The lasses feat, and cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when they're fine;
Their faces blithe, fu' sweetly kythe,
Hearts leal, and warm, and kin':
The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs,
Weel knotted on their garten,
Some unco blate, and some wi' gabs,
Gar lasses' hearts gang startin
Whiles fast at night.

Then first and foremost, thro' the kail,
Their stocks† maun a' be sought ance;
They steek their een, and graip and wale,
For muckle anes and straught anes.

* The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.

† The first ceremony of Halloween is, pulling each a stock, or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with. Its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any yird, or earth, stick to the root, that is tocher, or fortune; and the state of the custoc, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or to give them their ordinary appellation, the runts, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing the runts, the names in question.

Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
And wander'd thro' the bow-kail,
And pow't, for want o' better shift,
A runt was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow't that night.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar and cry a' throu'ther;
The vera wee things, todlin, rin
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;
And gif the custoc's sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs they taste them;
Syne coziely, aboon the door,
Wi' cannie care, they've plac'd them
To lie that night.

The lasses staw frae 'mang them a',
To pou their stalks o' corn;*
But Rab slips out, and jinks about,
Behint the muckle thorn:
He grippet Nelly hard and fast;
Loud skirled a' the lasses;
But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
When kiutlin in the fause-house†
Wi' him that night.

The auld guidwife's weel hoordet nits‡
Are round and round divided,

* They go to the barn-yard and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the top-pickle, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed any thing but a maid.

† When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green, or wet, the stack builder, by means of old timber, &c., makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind: this he calls a fause-house.

‡ Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire, and accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.

And monie lads and lasses' fates,
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle, couthie, side by side,
And burn thegither trimly,
Some start awa wi' saucy pride,
And jump out-owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

Jean slips in twa wi' tentie e'e;
Wha 'twas, she wadna tell;
But this is Jock, and this is me,
She says in to hersel:
He bleezed owre her, and she owre him,
As they wad never mair part;
Till fuff! he started up the lum,
And Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie;
And Mallie, nae doubt, took the drunt,
To be compared to Willie;
Mall's nit lap out wi pridefu' fling,
And her ain fit it brunt it;
While Willie lap, and swore by jing,
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
She pits hersel' and Rob in:
In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
Till white in ase they're sobbin:
Nell's heart was dancin at the view,
She whisper'd Rob to leuk for't:
Rob, stownlins prie'd her bonnie mou,
Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
Unseen that night.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin at their cracks,
And slips out by hersel':
She thro' the yard the nearest taks,
And to the kiln she goes then,
And darklins grapit for the bauks,
And in the blue-clue * throws then,
Right fear't that night.

And aye she win't and aye she swat,
I wat she made nae jaukin;
Till something held within the pat,
Guid Lord! but she was quakin!
But whether 'twas the Deil himsel,
Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did na wait on talkin
To spier that night.

Wee Jenny to her Grannie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, grannie?
I'll eat the apple † at the glass,
I gat frae uncle Johnie:"
She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin,
She notic't na, an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron
Out thro' that night.

* Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions: Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and, darkling, throw into the pot a clue of blue yarn: wind it in a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread, demand, *wha hauds?* i. e. who holds? an answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the christian and sirname of your future spouse.

† Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion, to be, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.

" Ye little skelpie-limmer's face!
How daur ye try sic sportin,
As seek the foul Thief ony place,
For him to spae your fortune:
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For monie a ane has gotten a fright,
And liv'd and di'd deleeret
On sic a night.

" Ae Hairst afore the Sherra-moor,
I mind't as weel's yestreen,
I was a gilpey then, I'm sure
I was na past fyfteen:
The simmer had been cauld and wat,
And stuff was unco green;
And aye a rantin kirn we gat,
And just on Halloween
It fell that night.

" Our stibble-rig was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow;
He's sin gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
That liv'd in Achmacalla:
He gat hemp-seed,* I mind it weel,
And he made unco light o't;
But monie a day was by himsel,
He was sae sairly frighted
That vera night."

* Steal out unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it with any thing you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, " Hemp-seed I saw thee; hemp-seed I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true love, come after me and pou thee." Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, " come after me, and shaw thee," that is, show thyself: in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, " come after me, and harrow thee."

Then up gat fechtin Jamie Fleck,
And he swore by his conscience,
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense:
The auld guidman raught down the pock,
And out a handfu' gied him;
Syne bad him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Sometime when nae ane see'd him,
And try't that night.

He marches thro' amang the stacks,
Tho' he was something sturtin,
The graip he for a harrow taks,
And haurls at his curpin:
And ev'ry now and then, he says,
"Hemp-seed I saw thee,
And her that is to be my lass,
Come after me, and draw thee,
As fast this night."

He whistled up Lord Lennox' march,
To keep his courage cheery;
Altho' his hair began to arch,
He was sae fley'd and eerie:
Till presently he hears a squeak,
And then a grane and gruntle;
He by his shouther gae a keek,
And tumbl'd wi' a wintle
Out-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!
And young and auld cam rinnin out,
To hear the sad narration:
He swoor 'twas hilchin Jean M'Craw,
Or crouchie Merran Humphie,

Till stop! she trotted thro' them a';
And wha was it but Grumphie
Asteer that night!

Meg fane wad to the barn gane,
To win three wechts o' naething;*
But for to meet the deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in;
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
And twa red cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples
That vera night.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,
And owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie gies a ca',
Syne bauldly in she enters;
A ratton rattled up the wa',
And she cry'd, Lord preserve her!
And ran thro' midden hole and a',
And pray'd wi' zeal and fervour,
Fu' fast that night.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice;
They hecht him some fine braw ane;

* This charm must likewise be performed unperceived, and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible; for there is danger, that the being about to appear, may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a wecht; and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.

It chanc'd the stack he faddom't thrice,*
Was timmer propt for thrawin ;
He taks a swirlie auld moss-oak,
For some black, grousome carlin ;
And loot a wince, and drew a stroke,
Till skin in blypes cam haurlin
Aff's nieves that night.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
As canty as a kittlen ;
But Och! that night, amang the shaws,
She got a fearfu' settlin!
She thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
And owre the hill gaed scrievin,
Whare three lairds' lands met at a burn,†
To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
Was bent that night.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie play'd,
As thro' the glen it wimpl't ;
Whyles round a rocky scaur it stray'd:
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle ;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.‡

* Take an opportunity of going unnoticed to a Bearstack, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.

† You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south running spring or rivulet, where 'three lairds' lands meet,' and dip your left shirt sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake; and, sometime near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.

‡ This stanza presents one of the most beautiful poetic pictures that ever was drawn; it is a perfect gem.—M.

Amang the brachens, on the brae,
Between her and the moon,
The deil, or else an outler quey,
Gat up and gae a croon;
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool!
Near lav'rock height she jumpit,
But mist a fit, and in the pool
Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
Wi' a plunge that night.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The luggies three* are ranged,
And ev'ry time great care is ta'en,
To see them duly changed;
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
Sin' Mar's-year did desire,
Because he gat the toom dish thrice,
He heav'd them on the fire,
In wrath that night.

Wi' merry sangs, and friendly cracks,
I wat they did na weary;
And unco tales, and funnie jokes,
Their sports were cheap and cheery;
Till butter'd So'ns,† wi' fragrant lunt,
Set a' their gabs a-steerin;
Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
They parted aff careerin
Fu' blithe that night.

* Take three dishes; put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty. Blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand; if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretells, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.

† Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Halloween Supper.

THE AULD FARMER'S

NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE MAGGIE,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR.*

A GUID New-year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie:
Tho' thou's howe-backit, now, and knaggie,
I've seen the day,
Thou could hae gane like onie staggie
Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff, and crazy,
And thy auld hide's as white's a daisy,
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek, and glaizie,
A bonny gray:
He should been tight that daur't to raize thee,
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A filly buirdly, steeve, and swank,
And set weel down a shapely shank,
As e'er tread yird;
And could hae flown out-owre a stank,
Like onie bird.

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my guid father's meere;

* Although Burns' jealousy of the rich and great sometimes led him to express himself regarding them in terms which seem to indicate a bitter, scornful, malignant spirit, yet he must have been an exceedingly good and kind-hearted being; for whenever he has occasion to address or mention any subordinate being, however mean, even a mouse or a flower, then there is a gentle pathos in his language that awakens the finest feelings of the heart.—H.

He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
And fifty mark;
Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
And thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
Ye then was trottin wi' your minnie:
Tho' ye was trickie, slee, and funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quiet, and cannie,
And unco sonsie.

That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonnie bride:
And sweet and gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle Stewart I could bragged wide,
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hobble,
And wintle like a saumont-coble,
That day ye was a jinker noble,
For heels and win'!
And ran them till they a' did wauble,
Far, far behin'.

When thou and I were young and skeigh,
And stable-meals at fairs were dreigh,
How thou wad prance, and snore, and skreigh,
And tak the road!
Town's bodies ran, and stood abeigh,
And ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, and I was mellow,
We took the road aye like a swallow;
At Brooses thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith and speed;

But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
And gar't them whaizle:
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazel.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee and I, in aught hours gaun,
On guid March weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han',
For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, and fetch't, and fliskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
And spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith and pow'r,
Till spritty knowes wad rair't and risket
And slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, and snaws were deep,
And threaten'd labour back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee-bit heap
Aboon the timmer;
I ken'd my Maggie wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit;
The steyest brae thou wad hae fac't it;
Thou never lap, and sten't, and breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa.

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a';
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae, I've sell't awa,
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me thretteen pund and twa,
The vera warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought,
And wi' the weary warl' fought!
And monie an anxious day, I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld, trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou's less deservin,
And thy auld days may end in starvin,
For my last fou,
A heapit stimpart, I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll toyte about wi' ane anither;
Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether,
To some hain'd rig,
Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,
Wi' sma fatigue.

TO A MOUSE,*

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH,

NOV. 1785.

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
O what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin and chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
And justifies that ill opinion
Which maks thee startle
At me thy poor earth-born companion,
And fellow-mortal!

I doubtna, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker† in a thrave
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
And naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
And bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell and keen!

* A beautiful little gem.—H.
† Daimen, rare,—daimen-icker, an ear of corn now and then.

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
And weary winter comin fast,
And cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves and stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
And cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice and men,
Gang aft a-gley,
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
And forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess and fear.

A WINTER NIGHT.*

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm!
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?——

SHAKSPEARE.

When biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glowr
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r,
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor labour sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl.

List'ning, the doors and winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing sprattle,
Beneath a scar.

* The beginning here is a capital description of the rising of a storm. Then again appears the kind feeling heart for any thing that is suffering.—H.

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
And close thy e'e?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood stain'd roost, and sheep cote spoil'd,
My heart forgets,
While pitiless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark mufflʼd, viewʼd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow, solemn, stole—

" Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice unrepenting,
Than heav'n-illumin'd man on brother man bestows!
See stern oppression's iron grip,
Or mad ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, want, and murder o'er a land!
Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pamper'd luxury, flatt'ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,

With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show,
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin'd,
Plac'd for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.
Where, where is love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly honour's lofty brow,
The pow'rs you proudly own?
Is there, beneath love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone!
Mark maiden-innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares,
This boasted honour turns away,
Shunning soft pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears, and unavailing pray'rs!
Perhaps, this hour, in mis'ry's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!
Oh ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill-satisfy'd keen nature's clam'rous call,
Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to sleep,
While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where guilt and poor misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushed low
By cruel fortune's undeserved blow?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!

I heard nae mair, for chanticleer,
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind—
Thro' all his works abroad,
The heart, benevolent and kind,
The most resembles GOD.

EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.*†

January —.

WHILE winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In hamely westlin jingle.
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the chimla lug,

* David Sillar, one of the club at Tarbolton, and author of a volume of poems in the Scottish dialect, printed at Kilmarnock, 1789.

† This is a first rate epistle, and though the poet shackled himself with a most difficult rhyme, it flows smooth and easy. Gilbert says it was one of his very earliest poems, but that I deny. Not only the execution, but the double mention of his Jean, proves it to have been written subsequently to the greater part of the poems first published. It is further asserted by Gilbert that his approbation of this epistle was the very first thing that suggested the idea of Robert's becoming an author.—H.

I grudge a wee the great folks' gift,
That live sae bien and snug:
I tent less, and want less
Their roomy fire-side;
But hanker and canker,
To see their cursed pride.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r,
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd:
How best o' chiels are whyles in want,
Whyle coofs on countless thousands rant,
And ken na how to wair't:
But, Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head,
Tho' we hae little gear,
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang's we're hale and fier:
"Mair spier na, nor fear na,"*
Auld age ne'er mind a feg,
The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only but to beg.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en
When banes are craz'd, and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress!
Yet then content could make us blest;
Ev'n then, sometimes we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However fortune kick the ba',
Has aye some cause to smile:
And mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma';
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther can we fa'.

* Ramsay.

What tho' like commoners of air,
We wander out, we know not where,
But either house or hall?
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound,
To see the coming year:
On braes when we please, then,
We'll sit and sowth a tune;
Syne rhyme till't, we'll time till't,
And sing't when we hae done.

It's no in titles nor in rank;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
It's no in making muckle mair:
It's no in books; it's no in lear,
To make us truly blest:
If happiness hae not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:
Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
Could make us happy lang;
The heart aye's the part aye,
That makes us right or wrang.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive thro' wet and dry,
Wi' never ceasing toil;
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?

Alas! how aft in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
They riot in excess!
Baith careless, and fearless
Of either heav'n or hell!
Esteeming, and deeming,
It's a' an idle tale!

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
By pining at our state;
And, even should misfortunes come,
I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
And's thankfu' for them yet.
They gie the wit of age to youth;
They let us ken oursel;
They make us see the naked truth,
The real guid and ill.
Tho' losses, and crosses,
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts!
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And flatt'ry I detest)
This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy:
And joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover and the frien';
Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean!
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her name:

It heats me, it beets me,
And sets me a' on flame!

O all ye Pow'rs who rule above!
O Thou, whose very self art love!
Thou know'st my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast.
Thou Being, All-seeing,
O hear my fervent pray'r;
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

All hail, ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow:
Long since, this world's thorny ways
Had number'd out my weary days,
Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
In every care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
A tie more tender still.
It lightens, it brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with and greet with
My Davie or my Jean.

O, how that name inspires my style!
The words come skelpin rank and file,
Amaist before I ken!

The ready measure rins as fine,
As Phœbus and the famous Nine
Were glowrin owre my pen.
My spaviet Pegasus will limp,
Till ance he's fairly het;
And then he'll hilch, and stilt, and jimp,
And rin an unco fit:
But lest then, the beast then,
Should rue this hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty, wizen'd hide.

SECOND EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.*

AULD NEEBOR,
I'M three times doubly o'er your debtor,
For your auld-farrant, frien'ly letter;
Tho' I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
Ye speak sae fair;
For my puir, silly, rhymin' clatter,
Some less maun sair.

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle;
Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle,
To cheer you thro' the weary widdle
O' war'ly cares,
Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
Your auld, gray hairs.

But Davie, lad, I'm red ye're glaikit;
I'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;
And gif it's sae, ye sud be lickit
Until ye fyke;

* This is prefixed to the poems of David Sillar, published at Kilmarnock, 1789.

Sic hauns as you sud ne'er be faikit,
Be hain't wha like.

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink,
Rivin the words to gar them clink;
Whyles dais't wi' love, whyles dais't wi' drink,
Wi' jads or masons;
And whyles, but aye owre late, I think
Braw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
Commen' me to the Bardie clan;
Except it be some idle plan
O' rhymin' clink,
The devil-haet, that I sud ban,
They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o' livin,
Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin';
But just the pouchie put the nieve in,
And while ought's there,
Then, hiltie, skiltie, we gae scrievin',
And fash nae mair.

Leeze me on rhyme! it's aye a treasure,
My chief, amaist my only pleasure,
At home, a-fiel', at work or leisure,
The Muse, poor hizzie!
Tho' rough and raploch be her measure,
She's seldom lazy.

Haud to the Muse, my dainty Davie;
The warl' may play you monie a shavie;
But for the Muse, she'll never leave ye,
Tho' e'er sae puir,
Na, even tho' limpin wi' the spavie
Frae door to door.

THE LAMENT,*

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

Alas! how oft does Goodness wound itself,
And sweet affection prove the spring of woe! HOME

O THOU pale orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch that inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
How life and love are all a dream.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly marked distant hill:
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
Reflected in the gurgling rill:
My fondly-fluttering heart, be still;
Thou busy pow'r, Remembrance, cease!
Ah! must the agonizing thrill
For ever bar returning peace!

No idly-feign'd poetic pains,
My sad love-lorn lamentings claim;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame;

* The occasion of this poem refers to the poet's amour with Jean Armour, as appears from his letter to Dr Moore. After mentioning the appearance of "Holy Willie's Prayer," which alarmed the Kirk session so much that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. Burns states, "unluckily for me my wanderings led me on another side within point blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem, 'The Lament.'"—M.

The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
The oft attested Pow'rs above;
The promis'd father's tender name;
These were the pledges of my love!

Encircled in her clasping arms,
How have the raptur'd moments flown!
How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,
For her dear sake, and hers alone!
And must I think it? is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast?
And does she heedless hear my groan?
And is she ever, ever lost?

Oh! can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honour, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth?
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie thro' rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will sooth,
Her sorrows share, and make them less?

Ye winged hours that o'er us past,
Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast,
My fondly treasur'd thoughts employ'd.
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her, too scanty once of room!
Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd,
And not a wish to gild the gloom!

The morn that warns th' approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe:
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.

Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant, western main.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
Or if I slumber, fancy, chief,
Reigns haggard-wild, in sore affright:
Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief,
From such a horror-breathing night.

O! thou bright queen, who o'er th expanse
Now highest reign'st with boundless sway!
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Observ'd us, fondly-wand'ring, stray!
The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual kindling eye.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
Scenes, never, never, to return!
Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
Again I feel, again I burn!
From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
Life's weary vale I'll wander thro';
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
A faithless woman's broken vow.

EPISTLE TO MAJOR W. LOGAN.*

HAIL, thairm-inspirin, rattlin Willie!
Though Fortune's road be rough and hilly
To every fiddling, rhyming billie,
We never heed,
But tak it like the unback'd filly,
Proud o' her speed.

When idly goavan whiles we saunter;
Gin Fancy barks, awa we canter,
Up-hill, down-brae, till some mishanter,
Some black bog-hole,
Arreest us; then the scathe and banter,
We're forc'd to thole.

Hale be your heart! Hale be your fiddle!
Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle,
To cheer you through the weary widdle
O' this vile warl';

* The above epistle was addressed by Burns to the late Major Wm. Logan of Camlarg, whilst residing at Park House, near Ayr, brother of the Miss Logan, to whom the Poet presented a copy of Beattie's Minstrel. Major Logan was esteemed one of the first violin players of his day. He was a great favourite with Neil Gow, who entertained a high opinion of the Major's musical skill. The epistle was written shortly after the Poet's intended visit to the West Indies was abandoned. To the kindness of Mr Auld of Bridge of Doon, we are indebted for its appearance in the present edition, as well as for the following note from Mrs M'Kenzie (late Miss Logan,) regarding the authenticity of the poem. "Mrs M'Kenzie feels pleasure in having it in her power to present Mr Auld with the inclosed. It is the handwriting of Burns, and was addressed by him to her brother the late Major Logan. Mrs M'Kenzie has reason to believe it has never been published, as she found it in a drawer of an old cabinet after her brother's death, and where, it is probable, it may have lain for the last forty years."—M.

Ayr, 26th Augt. 1828.

Until ye on a cummock driddle,
A grey-hair'd carl.

Come wealth, come poortith, late or soon,
Heav'n send your heart-strings aye in tune!
And screw your temper-pins aboon,
A fifth or mair,
The melancholious lazie croon
O' cankrie care!

May still your life, from day to day,
Nae 'lente largo,' in the play,
But 'allegretto forte,' gay,
Harmonious flow:
A sweeping, kindling, bauld strathspey,
Encore, bravo!

A' blessin's on the cheary gang,
Wha dearly like a jig or sang;
And never think o' right and wrang
By square and rule,
But as the clegs o' feeling stang,
Are wise or fool!

My hand-wal'd curse keep hard in chase
The harpy, hoodock, purse-proud race,
Wha count on poortith as disgrace!
Their tuneless hearts,
May fire-side discords jar a bass
To a' their parts!

But come—your hand—my careless brither—
I' th' tither warl', if there's anither,
And that there is, I've little swither
About the matter;
We, cheek for chow, shall jog thegither,
I'se ne'er bid better.

We've faults and failings—granted clearly;
We're frail, backsliding mortals merely;
Eve's bonny squad, priests wyte them sheerly,
For our grand fa';
But still—but still—I like them dearly!
Heaven bless them a'!

O hon! for poor Castalian drinkers,
When they fa' foul o' earthly jinkers!
The witching, curst, delicious blinkers
Hae put me hyte,
And gart me weet my waukrife winkers,
Wi' girnan spite.

But by yon moon! and that's high swearin';
And every star within my hearin'!
And by her een! wha was a dear ane!
I'll ne'er forget!
I hope to gie the jads a clearin'
In fair play yet.

My loss I mourn, but not repent it,
I'll seek my pursie whare I tint it:
Ance to the Indies I were wonted,
Some cantrip hour,
By some sweet elf I'll yet be dinted,
Then, '*vive l'amour.*

Faites mes baissemains respectueusè
To sentimental sister Susie,
And honest Luckie; no to roose you
Ye may be proud,
That sic a couple Fate allows ye
To grace your blood.

Nae mair at present can I measure,
And trowth my rhymin-ware's nae treasure;

Drawn by D. Allan — Eng^d by R. Scott, Edin^r

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

But when in Ayr, some half-hour's leisure,
Be't light, be't dark,
Sir Bard will do himsel the pleasure
To call at Park.
(Signed) ROBERT BURNS.

Mossgiel, 30th Octr. 1786.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.*

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKIN, ESQ.

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure:
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short but simple annals of the poor.
GRAY.

I

MY lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays:
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end;
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:

* In a letter to Dr Currie, Gilbert Burns gives the following account of the origin of The Cotter's Saturday Night:—"Robert had frequently remarked to me, that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, 'Let us worship God,' used by a decent, sober head of a family, introducing family worship. To this sentiment of the author the world is indebted for the *Cotter's Saturday Night*. The hint of the plan, and title of the poem, were taken from Fergusson's *Farmer's Ingle*. When Robert had not some pleasure in view, in which I was not thought fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together, when the weather was favourable on the Sunday afternoons (those precious breathing times to the labouring part of the community), and enjoyed such Sundays as would make one regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks, that I first had the pleasure of hearing the author repeat the *Cotter's Saturday Night*. I do not recollect to have read or heard any thing by which I was more highly *electrified*. The fifth and sixth stanzas, and the eighteenth, thrilled with peculiar ecstasy through my soul. I mention this to you, that you may see what hit the

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aikin in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

II.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose;
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

taste of unlettered criticism. I should be glad to know, if the enlightened mind and refined taste of Mr Roscoe, who has borne such honourable testimony to this poem, agrees with me in the selection."

Mr Lockhart, in the admirable sketch he has given us of the poet's life, observes in reference to this poem:—"*The Cotter's Saturday Night* is, perhaps, of all Burns' pieces, the one whose exclusion from the collection, were such things possible now-a-days, would be the most injurious, if not to the genius, at least to the character, of the man. In spite of many feeble lines, and some heavy stanzas, it appears to me, that even his genius would suffer more in estimation, by being contemplated in the absence of this poem, than of any other single performance he has left us. Loftier flights he certainly has made, but in these he remained but a short while on the wing, and effort is too often perceptible; here the motion is easy, gentle, placidly undulating. There is more of the conscious security of power, than in any other of his serious pieces of considerable length; the whole has the appearance of arising in a full stream from the fountain of the heart—a stream that soothes the ear, and has no glare on the surface.

"It is delightful to turn from any of the pieces, which present so great a genius as writing under an inevitable burden, to this, where his buoyant energy seems not even to feel the pressure. The miseries of toil and penury, who shall affect to treat as unreal? yet they shrunk to small in the presence of a spirit thus

III.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through
To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin noise and glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

IV.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun',
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to show a braw new gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

V.

Wi' joy-unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;

exalted at once, and softened by the pieties of virgin love, filial reverence, and devotion.

"That he who thus enthusiastically apprehended, and thus exquisitely painted, the artless beauty and solemnity of the feelings and thoughts that ennobled the life of the Scottish peasant, could witness observances in which the very highest of these redeeming influences are most powerfully and gracefully displayed, and yet describe them in a vein of unmixed merriment—that the same man should have produced the *Cotter's Saturday Night* and the *Holy Fair* about the same time—will ever continue to move wonder and regret."—M.

The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view,
The mother wi' her needle and her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

VI.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warned to obey;
"And mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
And O! be sure to fear the LORD alway!
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore his counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the LORD aright!"

VII.

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
With heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

VIII.

Wi' kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben:
A strappin youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave;
Weel pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

IX.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
"If Heav'n a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

X.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild!

XI.

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food;
The soupe their only Hawkie does afford,
That yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell,
And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

XII.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;

The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride: *
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

XIII.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name:
Or noble Elgin beets the heav'n-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

XIV.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;

* The following lines on the same subject are by Mrs Hemans:

TO A FAMILY BIBLE.

What household thoughts around thee, as their shrine,
Cling reverently!—Of anxious looks beguiled,
My mother's eyes upon thy page divine
Were daily bent; her accents, gravely mild,
Breathed out thy lore;—whilst I, a dreamy child,
On breeze-like fancies wandered oft away,
To some lone tuft of gleaming spring-flowers wild
Some fresh-discovered nook for woodland play,
Some secret nest:—yet would the solemn word
At times, with kindlings of young wonder heard,
Fall on my wakened spirit, there to be
A seed not lost; for which, in darker years,
O Book of Heaven! I pour, with grateful tears,
Heart-blessings on the holy dead and thee. M.

Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heav'n's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

XV.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
How his first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heav'n's command.

XVI.

Then kneeling down, to HEAV'N'S ETERNAL KING,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"*
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

XVII.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's ev'ry grace except the heart!

* Pope's Windsor Forest.

The Pow'r incens'd the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well-pleas'd, the language of the soul;
And in his book of life the inmates poor enrol.

XVIII.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

XIX.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of Kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of GOD:"
And certes, in fair virtue's heav'nly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind:
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

XX.

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil,
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, Oh! may Heav'n their simple lives prevent
From Luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd Isle.

XXI.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,*
Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part;
(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward;)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!†

*Burns made very few alterations in his compositions. This line in the first Edition ran thus: "That streamed thro' great, unhappy Wallace' heart;" as more euphonic the change is an improvement, without any impairment of its strength.—M.

† The remark of an old housekeeper at Dunlop House on this poem, may amuse some readers. Mrs M'Guistin, (for that was the good woman's name,) died some time after her Mistress, in the fifty-fourth year of her service in that family, and, by the time the poet was introduced to Mrs Dunlop's acquaintance, had acquired a sort of prescriptive right to have some attention paid to her peculiarities.

It was observed she did not seem quite convinced of the propriety of Mrs Dunlop's being as careful respecting accommodations and entertainment when this *new man* was expected, as when any of the neighbouring landed gentry visited at the house. By way of convincing her of the Poet's claim to such attention, Mrs Dunlop gave her the Cotter's Saturday Night to read. On returning the book she remarked—"Gentlemen and ladies may think muckle o' this; but for me its naething but what I saw i' my faither's house every day, and I dinna see how he could hae tell't it ony ither way."

We subjoin a few more critical opinions on this exquisite poem. Dr Currie says:—"The Cotter's Saturday Night is tender and moral, it is solemn and devotional, and rises at length into a strain of grandeur and sublimity which modern poetry has not surpassed. The noble sentiments of patriotism with which it concludes correspond with the rest of the poem. In no age or country have the pastoral muses breathed such elevated accents, if the Messiah of Pope be excepted, which is indeed a pastoral in form only. It is to be regretted that Burns did not employ his genius on other subjects of the same nature, which the manners and customs of the Scottish peasantry would have amply supplied. Such poetry is not to be estimated by the degree of

pleasure which it bestows; it sinks deeply into the heart, and is calculated far beyond any other human means for giving permanence to the scenes, and the character it so exquisitely describes."

Hazlitt's remarks are equally just:—"The Cotter's Saturday Night is a noble and pathetic picture of human manners, mingled with a fine religious awe. It comes over the mind like a slow and solemn strain of music. The soul of the poet aspires from this scene of low-thoughted care, and reposes in trembling hope on 'the bosom of its Father and its God.' Hardly any thing can be more touching than the following stanzas for instance, whether as they describe human interests, or breathe a lofty devotional spirit." The critic quotes from the line, 'The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,' and ends with the stanza concluding thus—

'Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.'

"Burns," says Jeffrey, in the 'Edinburgh Review,' "is almost equally distinguished for his tenderness and humour; we might have added, for a faculty of combining them both in the same subject, not entirely without parallel in the older poets and balladmakers, but altogether singular, we think, among modern writers. The passages of pure humour are entirely Scottish—and untranslateable. They consist in the most picturesque representations of life and manners, enlivened and even exalted by traits of exquisite sagacity and unexpected reflection. His tenderness is of two sorts; that which is combined with circumstances and characters of humble and ludicrous simplicity; and that which is produced by gloomy and distressful impressions acting on a mind of keen sensibility. The passages which belong to the former description, are, we think, the most exquisite and original, and, in our estimation, indicate the greatest and most amiable turn of genius; both as being accompanied by fine and feeling pictures of humble life, and as requiring that delicacy as well as justness of conception by which alone the fastidiousness of an ordinary reader can be reconciled to such representations. The exquisite description of the 'Cotter's Saturday Night' affords, perhaps, the finest example of this sort of pathetic. Its whole beauty cannot, indeed, be discerned, but by those whom experience has enabled to judge of the admirable fidelity and completeness of the picture. But independent altogether of national peculiarities, and even in spite of the obscurity of the language, we are persuaded that it is impossible to peruse the following stanzas without feeling the force of tenderness and truth." The critic then quotes from the stanza beginning,—

'November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;'

to the one ending,—

'But chiefly in their hearts with grace divine preside.'

We think no person of ordinary taste and feeling can differ in opinion with the Reviewer.

We shall conclude with Dr Irving's observations:—"The most exquisite of his serious poems is 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' The characters and incidents which the poet here describes in so interesting a manner are such as his father's cottage presented to his observation; they are such as may everywhere be found among the virtuous and intelligent peasantry of Scotland. 'I recollect once he told me,' says Professor Stewart, 'when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind which none could understand who had not witnessed like himself the happiness and the worth which they contained.' With such impressions as these upon his mind, he has succeeded in delineating a charming picture of rural innocence and felicity. The incidents are well-selected, the characters skilfully distinguished, and the whole composition is remarkable for the propriety and sensibility which it displays."—M.

THE FIRST SIX VERSES

OF THE NINETIETH PSALM.

O THOU, the first, the greatest Friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling place!

Before the mountains heav'd their heads
Beneath thy forming hand,
Before this pond'rous globe itself
Arose at thy command;

That pow'r which rais'd and still upholds
This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time,
Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years
Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before thy sight
Than yesterday that's past.

Thou gav'st the word: Thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought:
Again thou say'st, "Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!"

Thou layest them, with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood thou tak'st them off
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flow'r,
In beauty's pride array'd;
But long ere night cut down, it lies
All wither'd and decay'd.

A PRAYER IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

O THOU unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun;
As something, loudly, in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done;

Thou know'st that thou hast formed me
With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
Or frailty stept aside,
Do thou, All Good! for such thou art,
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
No other plea I have,
But, Thou art good; and goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

STANZAS ON THE SAME OCCASION.

Why am I loath to leave this earthly scene?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between:
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewed storms:
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms;
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms;
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, "Forgive my foul offence!"
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But, should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair virtue's way;
Again in folly's path might go astray;
Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran?

O Thou great Governor of all below!
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
Or still the tumult of the raging sea;
With that controlling pow'r assist ev'n me,
Those headlong furious passions to confine;
For all unfit I feel my powers to be,
To rule their torrent in th' allowed line;
O, aid me with thy help, Omnipotence Divine!

TO RUIN.*

All hail! inexorable lord!
At whose destruction-breathing word,
The mightiest empires fall!
Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of grief and pain,
A sullen welcome, all!
With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
I see each aimed dart:
For one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart.
Then low'ring and pouring,
The storm no more I dread;
Tho' thick'ning and black'ning,
Round my devoted head.

And thou grim pow'r, by life abhorr'd
While life a pleasure can afford,
Oh! hear a wretch's pray'r!
No more I shrink appall'd, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
To close this scene of care!
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Resign life's joyless day;
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
Cold mould'ring in the clay?
No fear more, no tear more,
To stain my lifeless face;
Enclasped, and grasped
Within thy cold embrace!

* "In various poems Burns has exhibited the picture of a mind under the deep impressions of real sorrow. The Lament, the Ode to Ruin, Despondency, and Winter a Dirge, are of this character. In the first of those poems the 8th stanza, which describes a sleepless night from anguish of mind, is particularly striking.

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.*

MAY ——, 1786.

I LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve nae other end
Than just a kind memento;
But how the subject theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps turn out a sermon.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
And, Andrew dear, believe me,
Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
And muckle they may grieve ye:
For care and trouble set your thought,
E'en when your end's attained;
And a' your views may come to nought,
Where every nerve is strained.

I'll no sae men are villains a';
The real, harden'd wicked,

Burns often indulged in those melancholy views of the nature and condition of man, which are so congenial to the temperament of sensibility."—*Currie.*

* This is a beautiful and masterly poem, written, I believe, to Mr Andrew Aikin, son to Robert Aikin, writer in Ayr, to whom the COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT is inscribed. H.——"Burns' poetical epistles to his friends," says Hazlitt, "are admirable, whether for the touches of satire, the painting of character, or the sincerity of friendship they display. Those to Captain Grose, and to Davie a brother poet, are among the best:—they are 'the true pathos and sublime of human life.'" The Critic might in his enumeration have included the above. It displays much shrewdness, an intimate acquaintance with human nature, and great kind-heartedness. When Burns employs his mind in giving rules for moral and prudential conduct, no man is a sounder philosopher.—M.

Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricked;
But och, mankind are unco weak,
And little to be trusted;
If self the wavering balance shake,
It's rarely right adjusted!

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,
Their fate we shouldna censure,
For still th' important end of life
They equally may answer;
A man may hae an honest heart,
Tho' poortith hourly stare him:
A man may tak a neebor's part,
Yet hae na cash to spare him.

Aye free, aff han' your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel as weel's you can
Frae critical dissection;
But keek thro' ev'ry other man,
Wi' sharpen'd sly inspection.

The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it:
I wave the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But och! it harden's a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justified by honour;

Not for to hide it in a hedge,
  Nor for a train attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
  Of being independent.

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
  To haud the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your honour grip,
  Let that aye be your border;
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
  Debar a' side pretences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
  Uncaring consequences.

The great Creator to revere,
  Must sure become the creature;
But still the preaching cant forbear,
  And e'en the rigid feature:
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
  Be complaisance extended;
An Atheist's laugh's a poor exchange
  For Deity offended!

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
  Religion may be blinded;
Or, if she gie a random sting,
  It may be little minded;
But when on life we're tempest-driv'n,
  A conscience but a canker—
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n,
  Is sure a noble anchor!

Adieu, dear amiable youth!
  Your heart can ne'er be wanting;
May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
  Erect your brow undaunting!

In ploughman phrase, "God send you speed,"
Still daily to grow wiser!
And may you better reck the rede,
Than ever did th' adviser!

ON A SCOTCH BARD,*

GONE TO THE WEST INDIES.

A' YE wha live by soups o' drink,
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,
A' ye wha live and never think,
Come mourn wi' me!
Our billie's gien us a' a jink,
And owre the sea.

Lament him a' ye rantin core,
Wha dearly like a random-splore,
Nae mair he'll join the merry roar,
In social key;
For now he's ta'en anither shore,
And owre the sea.

* This was written of himself, and put into the hands of a friend, to be read at the first masonic meeting after he had left them for the West Indies. H.——We have heard it stated that this was composed on one John Gerrond, a smith and poetaster, who went to the West Indies; but this is a mistake. An account of Gerrond will be found in that curious farrago, entitled M'Taggart's Gallovidian Dictionary, where the following anecdote of him occurs. While ranging for subscribers once through the country, a priest was so impudent as to tell him he was *no poet*. Don't you think, returned our hero, that the Almighty is as potent now as he was in the days of old? Surely, replied the priest. Why then, quoth Gerrond, he has opened the mouth of another ass to-day methinks. M.

The bonnie lasses weel may wiss him,
And in their dear petitions place him:
The widows, wives, and a' may bless him,
Wi' tearfu' e'e;
For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him,
That's owre the sea.

O Fortune, they hae room to grumble!
Hadst thou ta'en aff some drowsy bummle,
Wha can do nought but fyke and fumble,
'Twad been nae plea;
But he was gleg as ony wumble,
That's owre the sea.

Auld, canty Kyle may weepers wear,
And stain them wi' the saut, saut tear;
'Twill mak her poor auld heart, I fear,
In flinders flee:
He was her laureate monie a year,
That's owre the sea.

He saw misfortune's cauld nor-west
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A jillet brak his heart at last,
Ill may she be!
So, took a berth afore the mast,
And owre the sea.

To tremble under Fortune's cummock,
On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
Wi' his proud, independent stomach
Could ill agree;
So, row't his hurdies in a hammock,
And owre the sea.

He ne'er was gien to great misguiding,
Yet coin his pouches wadna bide in;

Wi' him it ne'er was under hiding;
He dealt it free:
The muse was a' that he took pride in,
That's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
And hap him in a cozie biel:
Ye'll find him aye a daintie chiel,
And fou' o' glee;
He wadna wrang'd the vera deil,
That's owre the sea.

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie!
Your native soil was right ill-willie;
But may ye flourish like a lily,
Now bonnilie!
I'll toast ye in my hindmost gillie,
Tho' owre the sea!

TO A HAGGIS.*

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the pudding race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm;
Weel are ye wordy of a grace
As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill,

* This poem, written in the house of Mr Andrew Bruce, Castle Hill, Edinburgh, where a haggis one day made part of the dinner, was originally printed in the Scots Magazine, for January, 1787, in which copy the last stanza reads as follows:—

Ye powers wha gie us a' that's gude,
Still bless auld Caledonia's brood,
Wi' great John Barleycorn's heart's blude,
In stoups or luggies,
And on our board, that king o' food,
A glorious Haggis! H.

Your pin wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need,
While through your pores the dews distil
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic labour dight,
And cut you up wi' ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright,
Like ony ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reekin, rich!

Then horn for horn they stretch and strive,
Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive,
Till a' their weel-swall'd kytes belyve,
Are bent like drums;
Then auld guidman, maist like to ryve,
Bethankit hums.

Is there that owre his French ragout,
Or olio that would staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad mak her spew
Wi' perfect scunner,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view,
On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a wither'd rash,
His spindle shank a guid whip lash,
His nieve a nit;
Through bloody flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

But mark the rustic, haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his tread,
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
He'll mak it whissle;
And legs, and arms, and heads will sned,
Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye Pow'rs wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratefu' pray'r,
Gie her a Haggis!

A DEDICATION TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.*

Expect na, Sir, in this narration,
A fleechin, fleth'rin dedication,
To rooze you up, and ca' you guid,
And sprung o' great and noble bluid,
Because ye're surnam'd like his grace,
Perhaps related to the race;
Then when I'm tir'd—and sae are ye,
Wi' mony a fulsome, sinfu lie,
Set up a face, how I stop short,
For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do—maun do, Sir, wi' them wha
Maun please the great folk for a wamefu';
For me! sae laigh I needna bow,
For, Lord be thankit, I can plough:

* Notwithstanding there is a little sly flattery in this poem, I regard it as one of Burns' very best. There is a great deal of humour and good nature in it.—H.

The Dedication to Gavin Hamilton, Dr Irving very justly remarks, may be classed among Burns' happier efforts. Of the same opinion is Dr Currie. The epistles of Burns, in which may be included his Dedication to G. H. Esq. discover, like his other writings, the powers of a superior understanding. They display deep insight into human nature, a gay and happy strain of reflection, great independence of sentiment and generosity of heart. —M.

And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg!
Sae I shall say, and that's nae flatt'rin,
It's just sic poet, and sic patron.

The Poet, some guid angel help him,
Or else, I fear some ill ane skelp him,
He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
But only he's no just begun yet.

The patron, (Sir, ye maun forgie me,
I winna lie, come what will o' me,)
On ev'ry hand it will allow'd be,
He's just—nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant,
He downa see a poor man want;
What's no his ain he winna tak it,
What ance he says he winna break it,
Ought he can lend he'll no refus't,
Till aft his guidness is abus'd;
And rascals whyles that do him wrang,
Ev'n that, he doesna mind it lang:
As master, landlord, husband, father,
He doesna fail his part in either.

But then nae thanks to him for a' that;
Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that;
It's naething but a milder feature
Of our poor, sinfu' corrupt nature:
Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
'Mang Black Gentoos and pagan Turks,
Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,
Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
That he's the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed.

It's no thro' terror of damnation;
It's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain!
Vain is his hope, whose stay and trust is
In moral mercy, truth, and justice!

No—stretch a point to catch a plack;
Abuse a brother to his back;
Steal thro' a winnock frae a whore,
But point the rake that taks the door:
Be to the poor like ony whunstane,
And haud their noses to the grunstane;
Ply ev'ry art o' legal thieving;
No matter,—stick to sound believing.

Learn three-mile pray'rs, and half-mile graces.
Wi' weel-spread looves, and lang wry faces;
Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own;
I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

O ye wha leave the springs o' Calvin,
For gumlie dubs of your ain delvin!
Ye sons of heresy and error,
Ye'll some day squeel in quaking terror!
When vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath;
When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
Just frets till heaven commission gies him;
While o'er the harp pale mis'ry moans,
And strikes the ever-deep'ning tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, Sir, for this digression,
I maist forgat my dedication:

But when divinity comes cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, Sir, ye see 'twas nae daft vapour,
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, Sir, to you:
Because (ye needna tak it ill)
I thought them something like yoursel.

Then patronise them wi' your favour,
And your petitioner shall ever—
I had amaist said ever pray,
But that's a word I needna say:
For prayin I hae little skill o't;
I'm baith dead-sweer, and wretched ill o't:
But I'se repeat each poor man's pray'r,
That kens or hears about you, Sir,—

"May ne'er misfortune's gowling bark,
Howl thro' the dwelling o' the Clerk!
May ne'er his gen'rous, honest heart,
For that same gen'rous spirit smart!
May Kennedy's far-honour'd name
Lang beet his hymeneal flame,
Till Hamiltons at least a dizen,
Are frae their nuptial lábours risen:
Five bonnie lasses round their table,
And seven braw fellows, stout and able
To serve their king and country weel,
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!
May health and peace, with mutual rays,
Shine on the evening o' his days;
Till his wee curlie John's ier-oe,
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow!"

I will not wind a lang conclusion,
Wi' complimentary effusion:

But whilst your wishes and endeavours
Are blest with Fortune's smiles and favours,
I am, dear Sir, with zeal most fervent,
Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which Pow'rs above prevent!)
That iron-hearted carl, Want,
Attended in his grim advances,
By sad mistakes, and black mischances,
While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
Make you as poor a dog as I am,
Your humble servant then no more;
For who would humbly serve the poor?
But by a poor man's hopes in Heaven!
While recollection's power is giv'n,
If in the vale of humble life,
The victim sad of fortune's strife,
I, through the tender gushing tear,
Should recognise my master dear,
If friendless, low, we meet together,
Then, Sir, your hand—my friend and brother!

TO A LOUSE,*

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT CHURCH.

Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie!
Your impudence protects you sairly:

* This is a homely enough subject for the muse; but lowly as it is, ample justice has been done to it. In his choice of subjects, Burns was by no means very fastidious, and more refined tastes would not have had the hardihood to introduce the

Ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd, by saunt and sinner,

I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
Owre gauze and lace;
Tho' faith, I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd, by saunt and sinner,
How dare ye set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady!
Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner,
On some poor body.

Swith, in some beggar's haffet squattle:
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,
Wi' ither kindred, jumpin cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er dare unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rils, snug and tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
Till ye've got on it,
The vera tapmost, tow'ring height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump and gray as ony grozet;
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty doze o't,
Wad dress your droddum!

as a vehicle for humorous sarcasm. The best verse, however, is the last; and if poetical merit were to be determined by frequency of quotation, it would stand very high in the scale. It is on every person's lips.—M.

I wadna been surpris'd to spy
You on an old wife's flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine Lunardi! * fie,
How dare ye do't!

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
And set your beauties a' abread!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin!
Thae winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin!

O wad some pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
And foolish notion:
What airs in dress and gait wad lea'e us,
And ev'n Devotion!

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.†

EDINA! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat legislation's sov'reign pow'rs!

* Lunardi made two ascents in his balloon from the Green of Glasgow, the first on the 5th November 1785, the second on the 5th December following. It would appear that in the Poet's day a particular description of women's bonnets was named after the daring aëronaut.

† I wish Burns had written a description of Edinburgh, such as the Holy Fair. There he would have had a noble field for satire, in the law-courts, the synods, the college, and the periodical literature. What a hand he would have made of these! If Burns had written a Chaldee manuscript, it would have been a dirker.——In this poem, the 2d and 5th stanzas are peculiarly striking and beautiful.—H.

From marking wildly-scatter'd flow'rs,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy trade his labours plies!
There architecture's noble pride
Bids elegance and splendour rise;
Here justice, from her native skies,
High wields her balance and her rod;
There learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks science in her coy abode.

Thy sons, EDINA, social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail;
Their views enlarg'd, their lib'ral mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale;
Attentive still to sorrow's wail,
Or modest merit's silent claim;
And never may their sources fail!
And never envy blot their name.

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn!
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptur'd thrill of joy!
Fair Burnet* strikes th' adoring eye,
Heaven's beauties on my fancy shine;
I see the sire of love on high,
And own his work indeed divine!

There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough rude fortress gleams afar;
Like some bold vet'ran, gray in arms,
And mark'd with many a seamy scar:

* Miss Burnet, daughter of Lord Monboddo.

The pond'rous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock,
Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repell'd th' invader's shock.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome,
Where Scotia's kings of other years,
Fam'd heroes, had their royal home:
Alas! how chang'd the times to come!
Their royal name low in the dust;
Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam!
Tho' rigid law cries out, 'twas just!

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors in days of yore,
Through hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps,
Old Scotia's bloody lion bore:
E'en I who sing in rustic lore,
Haply my sires have left their shed,
And fac'd grim danger's loudest roar,
Bold-following where your fathers led!

EDINA! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat legislation's sov'reign pow'rs!
From marking wildly-scatter'd flow'rs,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK,*

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.

April 1*st*, 1785.

While briers and woodbines budding green,
And paitricks scraichin loud at e'en,
And morning pussie whidden seen,
Inspire my muse,
This freedom in an unknown frien'
I pray excuse.

On Fasten-een we had a rockin,†
To ca' the crack and weave our stockin;

* This and the following are efforts to flatter a very indifferent poet; indeed no poet at all. Lapraik's volume was printed at Kilmarnock, in 1788. He was the author of the song, "When I upon thy bosom lean," printed in "Johnson's Scottish Museum," a song much admired by Burns, and to which he alludes in this epistle. Burns elsewhere describes him as that "very worthy facetious old fellow, John Lapraik, late of Dalfram near Muirkirk, which little property he was obliged to sell in consequence of some connection as security for some person concerned in that villanous bubble, the Ayr Bank."—H.

† Gilbert Burns supplies us with a definition of a Rockin, in the pleasing notice he gives of the circumstances under which this poem was composed. "The epistle to John Lapraik was produced exactly on the occasion described by the author. He says in that poem, on *Fasten-een we had a rockin.* I believe he has omitted the word Rockin in the Glossary. It is a term derived from those primitive times when the country women employed their spare hours in spinning on the rock or distaff. This simple implement is a very portable one, and well fitted to the social inclination of meeting in a neighbour's house; hence the phrase of *going a rocking*, or *with the rock.* As the connexion the phrase had with the implement was forgotten, when the rock gave place to the spinning wheel; the phrase came to be used by both sexes on social occasions, and men talk of going with their rocks as well as women. It was at one of these *rockings*, at our house, when we had twelve or fifteen young people with their *rocks*, that

And there was muckle fun and jokin,
Ye needna doubt;
At length we had a hearty yokin'
At sang about.

There was ae sang amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife:
It thirl'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought described sae weel,
What gen'rous manly bosoms feel:
Thought I, "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark!"
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin-fain to hear't,
And sae about him there I spier't,
Then a' that ken't him, round declar'd
He had ingine,
That nane excell'd it, few cam near't,
It was sae fine.

That set him to a pint of ale,
And either douce or merry tale,
Or rhymes and sangs he'd made himsel,
Or witty catches,
'Tween Inverness and Tiviotdale,
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, and swoor an aith,
Tho' I should pawn my pleugh and graith,

Lapraik's song beginning 'When I upon thy bosom lean,' was sung, and we were informed who was the author. Upon this Robert wrote his first epistle to Lapraik, and his second in reply to his answer."—M.

Or die a cadger pownie's death,
At some dyke back,
A pint and gill I'd gie them baith
To hear your crack.

But, first and foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle fell,
Tho' rude and rough,
Yet crooning to a body's sel'
Does weel eneugh.

I am nae poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymer, like, by chance,
And hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet what the matter?
When'er my muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, "How can you e'er propose,
You wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To mak a sang?"
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye're may be wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns and stools;
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye'd better ta'en up spades and shools,
Or knappin-hammers.

A set o' dull, conceited hashes,
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;

And syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I drudge thro' dub and mire
At pleugh or cart,
My muse, tho' hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

O for a spunk o' Allan's glee,
Or Ferguson's, the bauld and slee,
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear eneugh for me,
If I could get it.

Now, Sir, if ye hae friends enow,
Tho' real friends, I b'lieve, are few,
Yet, if your catalogue be fou,
I'se no insist,
But gif ye want ae friend that's true,
I'm on your list.

I winna blaw about mysel;
As ill I like my faults to tell;
But friends, and folk that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me;
Tho' I maun own, as monie still
As sair abuse me.

There's ae wee fault they whyles lay to me,
I like the lasses—Gude forgie me!
For monie a plack they wheedle frae me,
At dance or fair;
May be some ither thing they gie me
They weel can spare.

But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We'se gie ae night's discharge to care,
If we forgather,
And hae a swap o' rhymin-ware
Wi' ane anither.

The four gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,
And kirsen him wi' reekin water;
Syne we'll sit down and tak our whitter,
To cheer our heart;
And faith we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa, ye selfish war'ly race,
Wha think that havins, sense, and grace,
Ev'n love and friendship, should give place
To catch-the-plack!
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers!

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the grissle:
Twa lines frae you would gar me fissle,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing, or whissle,
Your friend and servant.

TO THE SAME.

APRIL 21st, 1785.

WHILE new-ca'd kye rowte at the stake,
And pownies reek in pleugh or braik,
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
To own I'm debtor
To honest-hearted, auld Lapraik,
For his kind letter.

Forjesket sair, with weary legs,
Rattlin the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing thro' amang the naigs
Their ten hours bite,
My awkart muse sair pleads and begs,
I wouldna write.

The tapetless ramfeezl'd hizzie,
She's saft at best, and something lazy,
Quo' she, "Ye ken, we've been sae busy
This month and mair,
That trouth my head is grown right dizzie,
And something sair."

Her dowff excuses pat me mad;
"Conscience," says I, "ye thowless jad!
I'll write, and that a hearty blaud,
This vera night;
So dinna ye affront your trade,
But rhyme it right.

"Shall bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts,
Tho' mankind were a pack o' cartes,

Roose you sae weel for your deserts,
In terms sae friendly,
Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts,
And thank him kindly!"

Sae I gat paper in a blink,
And down gaed stumpie in the ink:
Quoth I, "Before I sleep a wink,
I vow I'll close it;
And if ye winna mak it clink,
By Jove I'll prose it!"

Sae I've begun to scrawl, but whether
In rhyme, or prose, or baith thegither,
Or some hotch-potch that's rightly neither,
Let time mak proof;
But I shall scribble down some blether
Just clean aff-loof.

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge and carp,
Tho' fortune use you hard and sharp;
Come, kittle up your moorland harp
Wi' gleesome touch!
Ne'er mind how fortune waft and warp;
She's but a bitch.

She's gi'en me monie a jirt and fleg,
Sin' I could striddle owre a rig;
But, by the Lord, tho' I should beg
Wi' lyart pow,
I'll laugh, and sing, and shake my leg,
As lang's I dow!

Now comes the sax and twentieth simmer,
I've seen the bud upo' the timmer,
Still persecuted by the limmer
Frae year to year;

But yet, despite the kittle kimmer,
I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city Gent,
Behint a kist to lie and sklent,
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent. per cent.
And muckle wame,
In some bit brugh to represent
A Bailie's name?

Or is't the paughty, feudal Thane,
Wi' ruffl'd sark and glancing cane,
Wha thinks himsel nae sheep-shank bane,
But lordly stalks,
While caps and bonnets aff are ta'en,
As by he walks?

"O Thou wha gies us each guid gift!
Gie me o' wit and sense a lift,
Then turn me, if Thou please, adrift
Thro' Scotland wide;
Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,
In a' their pride!"

Were this the charter of our state,
"On pain o' hell be rich and great,"
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remead;
But, thanks to Heav'n! that's no the gate
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began,
"The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be,
'Tis he fulfils great Nature's plan,
And none but he!"

O mandate glorious and divine!
The ragged followers of the Nine,
Poor, thoughtless devils! yet may shine
In glorious light,
While sordid sons of Mammon's line
Are dark as night.

Tho' here they scrape, and squeeze, and growl,
Their worthless nievefu' of a soul
May in some future carcase howl
The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detesting owl
May shun the light.

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,
To reach their native, kindred skies,
And sing their pleasures, hopes, and joys,
In some mild sphere,
Still closer knit in friendship's ties,
Each passing year!

TO THE SAME.

SEPT. 13th, 1785.

Guid speed and furder to you Johny,
Guid health, hale han's, and weather bonny;
Now when ye're nickan down fu' canny
The staff o' bread,
May ye ne'er want a stoup o' bran'y
To clear your head.

May Boreas never thresh your rigs,
Nor kick your rickles aff their legs,
Sendin' the stuff o'er muirs and haggs
Like drivin' wrack;

But may the tapmast grain that wags
Come to the sack.

I'm bizzie too, and skelpin' at it.
But bitter, daudin showers hae wat it,
Sae my auld stumpie pen I gat it,
Wi' muckle wark,
And took my jocteleg and whatt it,
Like ony clark.

It's now twa month that I'm your debtor,
For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
Abusin' me for harsh ill nature
On holy men,
While deil a hair yoursel ye're better,
But mair profane.

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
Let's sing about our noble sels;
We'll cry nae jads frae heathen hills,
To help, or roose us,
But browster wives and whiskie stills,
They are the muses.

Your friendship, Sir, I winna quat it,
And if ye mak objections at it,
Then han' in nieve some day we'll knot it,
And witness take,
And when wi' usquebae we've wat it,
It winna break.

But if the beast and branks be spar'd
Till kye be gaun without the herd,
And a' the vittel in the yard,
An' theekit right,
I mean your ingle-side to guard
Ae winter night.

Then muse-inspirin' aqua-vitæ
Shall make us baith sae blythe and witty,
Till ye forget ye're auld and gatty,
And be as canty
As ye were nine year less than thretty,
Sweet ane an' twenty.

But stooks are cowpet wi' the blast,
And now the sinn keeks in the west,
Then I maun rin amang the rest
And quat my chanter;
Sae I subscribe mysel in haste,
Yours, Rab the Ranter.*

TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH,†

INCLOSING A COPY OF HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER, WHICH HE HAD REQUESTED.

Sept. 17*th*, 1785.

WHILE at the stook the shearers cow'r
To shun the bitter blaudin' show'r,
Or in gulravage rinnin scow'r,
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

* "Rab the Ranter."—It is very probable that the poet thus named himself after the Border Piper, so spiritedly introduced in the popular song of Maggie Lauder:—

"For I'm a piper to my trade,
My name is Rab the Ranter;
The lasses loup as they were daft,
When I blaw up my chanter."

† The gentleman to whom this epistle is addressed, was assistant to the Rev. Peter Woodrow of Tarbolton. We have heard that he fell into rather dissipated habits, and either resigned his charge

My musie, tir'd wi' mony a sonnet,
On gown, and ban', and douse black bonnet,
Is grown right eerie now she's done it,
Lest they should blame her,
And rouse their holy thunder on it,
And anathem her.

or was deposed. He afterwards enlisted as a common soldier in the army. The following succinct and luminous account of the polemical controversy on which Burns spent so much of his keen satire, is taken from Mr Lockhart's Life of the poet.

"It is impossible to look back now to the civil war, which then raged among the churchmen of the west of Scotland, without confessing, that on either side there was much to regret, and not a little to blame. Proud and haughty spirits were unfortunately opposed to each other; and in the superabundant display of zeal as to doctrinal points, neither party seems to have mingled much of the charity of the Christian temper. The whole exhibition was most unlovely—the spectacle of such indecent violence among the leading Ecclesiastics of the district, acted most unfavourably on many men's minds—and no one can doubt, that in the at best unsettled state of Robert Burns's principles, the unhappy effect must have been powerful indeed as to him.

"Macgill and Dalrymple, the two ministers of the town of Ayr, had long been suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions on several points, particularly the doctrine of original sin, and even of the Trinity; and the former at length published an Essay, which was considered as demanding the notice of the Church-courts. More than a year was spent in the discussions which arose out of this; and at last Dr Macgill was fain to acknowledge his errors, and promise that he would take an early opportunity of apologizing for them to his own congregation from the pulpit —which promise, however, he never performed. The gentry of the country took, for the most part, the side of Macgill, who was a man of cold unpopular manners, but of unreproached moral character, and possessed of some accomplishments, though certainly not of distinguished talents. The bulk of the lower orders espoused, with far more fervid zeal, the cause of those who conducted the prosecution against this erring doctor. Gavin Hamilton, and all persons of his stamp, were of course on the side of Macgill—Auld, and the Mauchline elders, with his enemies. Mr Robert Aiken, a writer in Ayr, a man of remarkable talents, particularly in public speaking, had the principal management of Macgill's cause before the Presbytery, and, I believe, also before the Synod. He was an intimate friend of Hamilton, and through him had about this time formed an acquaintance, which soon ri-

I own 'twas rash, and rather hardy,
That I, a simple country bardie,
Should meddle wi' a pack sae sturdy,
Wha, if they ken me,
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Louse hell upon me.

pened into a warm friendship, with Burns. Burns, therefore, was from the beginning a zealous, as in the end he was perhaps the most effective partizan, of the side on which Aiken had staked so much of his reputation. Macgill, Dalrymple, and their brethren, suspected, with more or less justice, of leaning to heterodox opinions, are the *New Light* pastors of his earliest satires.

"The prominent antagonists of these men, and chosen champions of the *Auld Light*, in Ayrshire, it must now be admitted on all hands, presented, in many particulars of personal conduct and demeanour, as broad a mark as ever tempted the shafts of a satirist. These men prided themselves on being the legitimate and undegenerate descendants and representatives of the haughty Puritans, who chiefly conducted the overthrow of Popery in Scotland, and who ruled for a time, and would fain have continued to rule, over both king and people, with a more tyrannical dominion than ever the Catholic priesthood itself had been able to exercise amidst that high-spirited nation. With the horrors of the Papal system for ever in their mouths, these men were in fact as bigoted monks, and almost as relentless inquisitors in their hearts, as ever wore cowl and cord—austere and ungracious of aspect, coarse and repulsive of address and manners—very Pharisees as to the lesser matters of the law, and many of them, to all outward appearance at least, overflowing with pharisaical self-conceit, as well as monastic bile. That admirable qualities lay concealed under this ungainly exterior, and mingled with and checked the worst of these gloomy passions, no candid man will permit himself to doubt or suspect for a moment; and that Burns has grossly overcharged his portraits of them, deepening shadows that were of themselves sufficiently dark, and excluding altogether those brighter, and perhaps softer, traits of character, which redeemed the originals within the sympathies of many of the worthiest and best of men, seems equally clear. Their bitterest enemies dared not at least to bring against them, even when the feud was at its height of fervour, charges of that heinous sort, which they fearlessly, and I fear justly, preferred against their antagonists. No one ever accused them of signing the Articles, administering the sacraments, and eating the bread of a Church, whose fundamental doctrines they disbelieved, and, by insinuation at least, disavowed.

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their sighin, cantin, grace-prood faces,
Their three-mile prayers, and haulf-mile graces,
Their raxan conscience,
Whase greed, revenge, and pride disgraces,
Waur nor their nonsense.

There's Gaun,* miska't waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honour in his breast
Than mony scores as guid's the priest,
Wha sae abus't him,
And may a bard no crack his jest,
What way they've use't him?

See him,† the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,
And shall his fame and honour bleed
By worthless skellums,

"The law of Church-patronage was another subject on which controversy ran high and furious in the district at the same period; the actual condition of things on this head being upheld by all the men of the New Light, and condemned as equally at variance with the precepts of the gospel, and the rights of freemen, by not a few of the other party, and, in particular, by certain conspicuous zealots in the immediate neighbourhood of Burns. While this warfare raged, there broke out an intestine discord within the camp of the faction which he loved not. Two of the foremost leaders of the Auld Light party quarrelled about a question of parish-boundaries; the matter was taken up in the Presbytery of Kilmarnock, and there, in the open court, to which the announcement of the discussion had drawn a multitude of the country people, and Burns among the rest, the reverend divines, hitherto sworn friends and associates, lost all command of temper, and abused each other *coram populo*, with a fiery virulence of personal invective, such as has long been banished from all popular assemblies, wherein the laws of courtesy are enforced by those of a certain unwritten code."

* Gavin Hamilton, Esq.

† The poet has introduced the two first lines of this stanza into the dedication of his works to Mr Hamilton.

And not a muse erect her head
To cowe the blellums?

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts,
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
And tell aloud,
Their jugglin', hocus pocus arts,
To cheat the crowd.

God knows, I'm no the thing I should be,
Nor am I even the thing I could be,
But twenty times, I rather would be
An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colours hid be,
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass,
But mean revenge, and malice fause,
He'll still disdain,
And then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They take religion in their mouth,
They talk o' mercy, grace, and truth;
For what?—to gie their malice skouth
On some puir wight,
And hunt him down, o'er right and ruth;
To ruin streight.

All hail, Religion! maid divine!
Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,
Who in her rough imperfect line,
Thus daurs to name thee;
To stigmatize false friends of thine,
Can ne'er defame thee.

Tho' blotch'd and foul wi' mony a stain,
And far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with those,
Who boldly dare thy cause maintain
In spite of foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite of undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth and merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit.

O Ayr, my dear, my native ground,
Within thy presbyterial bound
A candid lib'ral band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as christians too, renown'd,
And manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd;
Sir, in that circle you are fam'd;
And some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd,
(Which gies you honour)
Even Sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,
And winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have ta'en,
And if impertinent I've been,
Impute it not, good Sir, in ane
Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belang'd ye.

TO W. SIMPSON.*

OCHILTREE.

May, 1785.

I GAT your letter, winsome Willie;
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
Tho' I maun say't, I wad be silly
And unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxin billie,
Your flatterin' strain.

But I's believe ye kindly meant it,
I sud be laith to think ye hinted
Ironic satire, sidelins sklented
On my poor Musie;
Tho' in sic phraisin' terms ye've penn'd it,
I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,
Should I but dare a hope to speel,
Wi' Allan, or wi' Gilbertfield,
The braes o' fame;
Or Fergusson, the writer-chiel,
A deathless name.

(O, Fergusson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!

* Burns was partial to Schoolmasters, and he seems to have sedulously cultivated their friendship. The individual to whom this epistle is addressed was the parish Schoolmaster of Ochiltree, in the days of Burns, and is, we believe, still to this day. He appears to have been a versifier, though we have nothing extant whereby to judge of his merits in a poetical view. But Burns was easily satisfied, and he never appears to have entertained the slightest jealousy of any of his cotemporary "Bardies." In this poem there are some very fine lines, and much that reflects light on the poet's own moods of feeling and sympathy with external nature.—M.

My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
Ye E'nbrugh Gentry!
The tithe o' what ye waste at cartes,
Wad stow'd his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lassies gie my heart a screed,
As whyles they're like to be my dead,
(O sad disease!)
I kittle up my rustic reed;
It gies me ease.

Auld Coila now may fidge fu' fain,
She's gotten poets o' her ain,
Chiels wha their chanters winna hain,
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-sung praise.

Nae poet thought her worth his while,
To set her name in measur'd style;
She lay like some unkenn'd-of isle
Beside New-Holland,
Or whare wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay and famous Fergusson
Gied Forth and Tay a lift aboon;
Yarrow and Tweed, to monie a tune,
Owre Scotland rings,
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, and Doon,
Nae body sings.

Th' Illissus, Tiber, Thames, and Seine,
Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line!
But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
And cock your crest,
We'll gar our streams and burnies shine
Up wi' the best.

We'll sing auld Coila's plains and fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks and braes, her dens and dells,
Where glorious Wallace
Aft bure the gree, as story tells,
Frae Southron billies.

At Wallace' name what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red wat shod,
Or glorious dy'd.

O, sweet are Coila's haughs and woods,
When lintwhites chant amang the buds,
And jinkin hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy,
While thro' the braes the cushat croods
With wailfu' cry!

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frost on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day

O Nature! a' thy shews and forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms
Wi' life and light,
Or winter howls in gusty storms,
The lang dark night!

The Muse, nae poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel he learn'd to wander,

Adown some trotting burn's meander,
And no think lang;
O sweet, to stray and pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!

The war'ly race may drudge and drive,
Hog-shouther, jundie, stretch, and strive;
Let me fair Nature's face descrive,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy grumbling hive
Bum owre their treasure.

Fareweel, "my rhyme-composing brither!"
We've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither:
Now let us lay our heads thegither
In love fraternal:
May Envy wallop in a tether,
Black fiend, infernal!

While Highlandmen hate tolls and taxes;
While moorlan' herds like guid fat braxies;
While terra firma, on her axis
Diurnal turns,
Count on a friend, in faith and practice,
In Robert Burns.

POSTSCRIPT.*

My memory's no worth a preen;
I had amaist forgotten clean,
Ye bade me write you what they mean
By this new light,†

* I look on this as superior to the Epistle.—H. † See note, p. 55.

'Bout which our herds sae aft hae been
Maist like to fight.

In days when mankind were but callans
At grammar, logic, and sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gie,
But spak their thoughts in plain, braid lallans
Like you or me.

In thae auld times, they thought the moon,
Just like a sark or pair o' shoon,
Wore by degrees, till her last roon,
Gaed past their viewing,
And shortly after she was done,
They gat a new one.

This past for certain, undisputed;
It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,
Till chiels gat up and wad confute it,
And ca'd it wrang;
And muckle din there was about it,
Baith loud and lang.

Some herds weel learn'd upo' their beuk,
Wad threap auld folk the thing misteuk;
For 'twas the auld moon turn'd a neuk
And out o' sight,
And backlins-comin, to the leuk,
She grew mair bright.

This was deny'd, it was affirm'd;
The herds and hissels were alarm'd:
The rev'rend gray-beards rav'd and storm'd
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were inform'd
Than their auld daddies.

Frae less to mair it gaed to sticks;
Frae words and aiths to clours and nicks;
And monie a fallow gat his licks,
Wi' hearty crunt:
And some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd and brunt.

This game was play'd in monie lands,
And auld-light caddies bure sic hands,
That faith, the youngsters took the sands,
Wi' nimble shanks,
Till lairds forbade, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

But new-light herds gat sic a cowe,
Folk thought them ruin'd stick-and-stowe,
Till now amaist on ev'ry knowe,
Ye'll find ane plac'd;
And some, their new-light fair avow,
Just quite barefac'd.

Nae doubt the auld-light flocks are bleatin;
Their zealous herds are vex'd and sweatin;
Mysel, I've even seen them greetin
Wi' girnin spite,
To hear the moon sae sadly lie'd on
By word and write.

But shortly they will cowe the louns!
Some auld-light herds in neebor towns
Are mind't, in things they ca' balloons,
To tak a flight,
And stay a month amang the moons
And see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them;
And when the auld moon's gaun to lea'e them,

The hindmost shaird, they'll fetch it wi' them,
Just i' their pouch,
And when the new-light billies see them,
I think they'll crouch!

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter
Is naething but a "moonshine matter;"
But tho' dull prose-folk Latin splatter
In logic tulzie,
I hope, we bardies ken some better
Than mind sic brulzie.

WRITTEN IN FRIARS-CARSE HERMITAGE, ON NITH-SIDE.*

(FIRST COPY.)

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deck'd in silken stole,
'Grave these maxims on thy soul:

* This inscription was composed while Burns resided at Ellisland in the year 1788. The hermitage was the property of Captain Riddel, an antiquary of some note in his day, and the lines were written at his request. Burns appears to have thought much of them himself, for many transcripts of them in his own autograph are in the hands of his friends. The poem is sweet and elegant, but it has not won that admiration for it which its author evidently anticipated. Friars-Carse is now the property of Mrs Crichton, and a lovelier spot is not to be found on the banks of the Nith. The first copy, which has nothing in common with the second but the first four lines, was sent in a letter to Mrs Dunlop, Aug. 2d, 1788.—On the second also he made considerable alterations in printing. Instead of the six lines beginning—'Say, man's true genuine estimate,' in his manuscript the following are inserted:

Say, the criterion of their fate,
The important query of their state,
Is not, art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Wert thou cottager or king?
Prince or peasant?—no such thing. M.

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost.
Day, how rapid in its flight,—
Day, how few must see the night;
Hope not sunshine every hour:
Fear not clouds will ever lower.
Happiness is but a name,
Make content and ease thy aim.
Ambition is a meteor-gleam:
Fame, a restless idle dream;
Peace, the tenderest flow'r of spring:
Pleasures, insects on the wing.
Those that sip the dew alone,
Make the butterflies thy own:
Those that would the bloom devour
Crush the locust, save the flower.
For the future be prepar'd,
Guard wherever thou canst guard!
But, thy utmost duly done,
Welcome that thou canst not shun.
Follies past give thou to air,
Make their consequence thy care:
Keep the name of man in mind,
And dishonour not thy kind.
Reverence with lowly heart
Him whose wondrous work thou art;
Keep his goodness still in view,
Thy trust and thy example too.
Stranger, go! heaven be thy guide!
Quod the Beadsman of Nithside.

(SECOND COPY.)

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deckt in silken stole,
'Grave these counsels on thy soul.

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Hope not sunshine every hour,
Fear not clouds will always lower.

As youth and love with sprightly dance,
Beneath thy morning star advance,
Pleasure with her siren air,
May delude the thoughtless pair;
Let prudence bless enjoyment's cup,
Then raptur'd sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life's proud summits would'st thou scale?
Check thy climbing step, elate,
Evils lurk in felon wait;
Dangers, eagle-pinion'd, bold,
Soar around each cliffy hold,
While cheerful peace, with linnet-song,
Chants the lowly dells among.

As the shades of ev'ning close,
Beck'ning thee to long repose;
As life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-neuk of ease.
There ruminate with sober thought,
On all thou'st seen, and heard, and wrought;
And teach the sportive younkers round,
Saws of experience, sage and sound.
Say, man's true, genuine estimate,
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not, Art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Did many talents gild thy span?
Or frugal nature grudge thee one?

Tell them, and press it on their mind,
As thou thyself must shortly find,
The smile or frown of awful Heav'n,
To virtue or to vice is giv'n.
Say, to be just, and kind, and wise,
There solid self-enjoyment lies;
That foolish, selfish, faithless ways,
Lead to the wretched, vile, and base.

Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
To the bed of lasting sleep;
Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
Night where dawn shall never break,
Till future life, future no more,
To light and joy the good restore,
To light and joy unknown before.

Stranger, go! Heaven be thy guide!
Quod the beadsman of Nith-side.

ODE,

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MRS OSWALD OF AUCHINCRUIVE.

Dweller in yon dungeon dark,
Hangman of creation! mark
Who in widow-weeds appears,
Laden with unhonoured years,
Noosing with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse!

STROPHE.

View the wither'd beldam's face—
Can thy keen inspection trace
Aught of Humanity's sweet melting grace?

Note that eye, 'tis rheum o'erflows,
Pity's flood there never rose.
See those hands ne'er stretch'd to save,
Hands that took—but never gave.
Keeper of Mammon's iron chest,
Lo, there she goes, unpitied and unblest;
She goes, but not to realms of everlasting rest!

ANTISTROPHE.

Plunderer of armies, lift thine eyes,
(A while forbear, ye tort'ring fiends,)
Seest thou whose step unwilling hither bends?
No fallen angel, hurl'd from upper skies;
'Tis thy trusty quondam mate,
Doom'd to share thy fiery fate,
She, tardy, hell-ward plies.

EPODE.

And are they of no more avail,
Ten thousand glitt'ring pounds a-year?
In other worlds can Mammon fail
Omnipotent as he is here?
O, bitter mock'ry of the pompous bier,
While down the wretched vital part is driv'n!
The cave-lodg'd beggar, with a conscience clear,
Expires in rags, unknown, and goes to Heav'n.

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS,

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.*

Now Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phœbus cheers the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies;
But nought can glad the weary wight,
That fast in durance lies.

Now lav'rocks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bow'r,
Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis mild, wi' many a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae:
The meanest hind in fair Scotland,
May rove their sweets amang;
But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strang.

* With this ballad, formed on the model of "Lord Maxwell's Goodnight," Burns was highly pleased. In a letter to Graham of Fintry, inclosing it, he writes, "it has pleased me beyond any effort of my muse for a good while past."—M.

I was the Queen o' bonnie France,
Where happy I hae been;
Fu' lightly raise I in the morn,
As blythe lay down at e'en:
And I'm the sov'reign of Scotland,
And mony a traitor there;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never ending care.

But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my fae,
Grim vengeance, yet, shall whet a sword,
That through thy soul shall gae;
The weeping blood in woman's breast,
Was never known to thee;
Nor th' balm that draps on wounds of woe,
Frae woman's pitying e'e.

My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink on mine!
God keep thee frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee:
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me!

O! soon, to me, may summer-suns
Nae mair light up the morn!
Nae mair, to me, the autumn winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn!
And in the narrow house o' death,
Let winter round me rave;
And the next flow'rs that deck the spring,
Bloom on my peaceful grave!

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, Esq. OF FINTRY.

Late crippled of an arm, and now a leg,
About to beg a pass for leave to beg;
Dull, listless, teas'd, dejected, and deprest,
(Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest;)
Will generous Graham list to his poet's wail?
(It soothes poor misery, hearkening to her tale)
And hear him curse the light he first survey'd,
And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade?

Thou, Nature, partial Nature, I arraign;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain.
The lion and the bull thy care have found,
One shakes the forests, and one spurns the ground:
Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell,
Th' envenom'd wasp, victorious, guards his cell,
Thy minions, kings defend, control, devour,
In all th' omnipotence of rule and power.—
Foxes and statesmen, subtile wiles ensure;
The cit and polecat stink, and are secure.
Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
The priest and hedgehog in their robes, are snug,
Ev'n silly woman has her warlike arts,
Her tongue and eyes, her dreaded spear and darts.

But Oh! thou bitter step-mother and hard,
To thy poor, fenceless, naked child—the Bard!
A thing unteachable in world's skill,
And half an idiot too, more helpless still.
No heels to bear him from the op'ning dun;
No claws to dig, his hated sight to shun;
No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
And those, alas! not Amalthea's horn:
No nerves olfact'ry, Mammon's trusty cur
Clad in rich dulness' comfortable fur,

In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
He bears th' unbroken blast from ev'ry side:
Vampyre booksellers drain him to the heart,
And scorpion critics cureless venom dart.

Critics—appall'd I venture on the name,
Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame:
Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes;
He hacks to teach, they mangle to expose.

His heart by causeless wanton malice wrung,
By blockheads' daring into madness stung;
His well-won bays, than life itself more dear,
By miscreants torn, who ne'er one sprig must wear:
Foil'd, bleeding, tortur'd, in the unequal strife,
The hapless poet flounders on thro' life,
Till fled each hope that once his bosom fir'd,
And fled each muse that glorious once inspir'd,
Low sunk in squalid, unprotected age,
Dead, even resentment, for his injur'd page,
He heeds or feels no more the ruthless critic's rage.

So, by some hedge, the gen'rous steed deceas'd,
For half-starv'd snarling curs a dainty feast;
By toil and famine wore to skin and bone,
Lies senseless of each tugging bitch's son.

O dulness! portion of the truly blest!
Calm shelter'd haven of eternal rest!
Thy sons ne'er madden in the fierce extremes
Of fortune's polar frost, or torrid beams.
If mantling high she fills the golden cup,
With sober selfish ease they sip it up;
Conscious the bounteous meed they well deserve,
They only wonder, "some folks" do not starve.
The grave sage hern thus easy picks his frog,
And thinks the mallard a sad worthless dog.

When disappointment snaps the clue of hope,
And thro' disastrous night they darkling grope,
With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,
And just conclude "that fools are fortune's care."
So, heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks,
Strong on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

Not so the idle muses' mad-cap train,
Not such the workings of their moon-struck brain;
In equanimity they never dwell,
By turns in soaring heav'n, or vaulted hell.

I dread thee, fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear!
Already one strong hold of hope is lost,
Glencairn, the truly noble, lies in dust;
(Fled, like the sun eclips'd as noon appears,
And left us darkling in a world of tears:)
O! hear my ardent, grateful, selfish pray'r!
Fintry, my other stay, long bless and spare!
Thro' a long life his hopes and wishes crown,
And bright in cloudless skies his sun go down!
May bliss domestic smooth his private path;
Give energy to life; and soothe his latest breath,
With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!

LAMENT FOR JAMES, EARL OF GLENCAIRN.*

THE wind blew hollow frae the hills,
By fits the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods
That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding stream:

* A beautiful instance how sweetly and sincerely Burns wrote from the heart. Love, kindness, and gratitude were congenial to his nature; he lived and breathed in them. In the last stanza the Poet shows how closely he could approach the simplicity and touching pathos of our early Song.—H.

Beneath a craigy steep, a bard,
Laden with years and meikle pain
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom death had all untimely ta'en.

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
Whose trunk was mould'ring down with years;
His locks were bleached white with time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears!
And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
To echo bore the notes alang.

"Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
The reliques of the vernal quire!
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honours of the aged year!
A few short months, and glad and gay,
Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e;
But nocht in all revolving time
Can gladness bring again to me.

"I am a bending aged tree,
That long has stood the wind and rain;
But now has come a cruel blast,
And my last hald of earth is gane:
Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom;
But I maun lie before the storm,
And ithers plant them in my room.

"I've seen sae mony changefu' years,
On earth I am a stranger grown;
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing and unknown:

Unheard, unpitied, unreliev'd,
I bear alane my lade o' care,
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

"And last, (the sum of a' my griefs!)
My noble master lies in clay;
The flow'r amang our barons bold,
His country's pride, his country's stay:
In weary being now I pine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my aged ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

"Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
The voice of woe and wild despair!
Awake, resound thy latest lay,
Then sleep in silence evermair!
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillest an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the bard
Thou brought from fortune's mirkest gloom.

"In poverty's low barren vale,
Thick mists, obscure, involv'd me round;
Though oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
Nae ray of fame was to be found:
Thou found'st me, like the morning sun
That melts the fogs in limpid air,
The friendless bard and rustic song,
Became alike thy fostering care.

"O! why has worth so short a date?
While villains ripen grey with time!
Must thou, the noble, gen'rous, great,
Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime!

Why did I live to see that day?
A day to me so full of woe!
O! had I met the mortal shaft
Which laid my benefactor low!

"The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me!"

LINES SENT TO SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD

OF WHITEFOORD, BART.

WITH THE FOREGOING POEM.

THOU, who thy honour as thy God rever'st,
Who, save thy mind's reproach, nought earthly fear'st,
To thee this votive offering I impart,
The tearful tribute of a broken heart.
The friend thou valued'st, I the patron lov'd;
His worth, his honour, all the world approv'd.
We'll mourn till we too go as he has gone,
And tread the dreary path to that dark world unknown.

ELEGY ON CAPT. MATTHEW HENDERSON,*

A GENTLEMAN WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS HONOURS IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD!

But now his radiant course is run,
For Matthew's course was bright;
His soul was like the glorious sun,
A matchless Heav'nly Light!

O DEATH! thou tyrant fell and bloody!
The meikle devil wi' a woodie
Haurl ye hame to his black smiddie,
O'er hurcheon hides,
And like stock-fish come o'er his studdie
Wi' thy auld sides!

He's gane, he's gane! he's frae us torn,
The ae best fellow e'er was born!

* This is in Burns's very best style. He brings the scenes, the birds and the flowers, quite before the eyes of our imagination. I remember of Sir Walter Scott once showing me a very old metrical tale in heroic measure, as old apparently as Gawin Douglas's day, in which all the birds and beasts of the forest are called on, in the same manner as here, and with a great deal of characteristic humour. He said this poem of Burns's was taken from that; but as far as I remember, if there is an imitation, it is but as a shade, and hardly traceable. I have never been able to find that poem again, having forgot its name and all relating to it, save that I liked it, and that all the animals of my acquaintance were brought before my eyes with something characteristic about them, even the *Toddis* and the *Wulcattis*, &c. There is likewise a poem by the Earl of Stirling, published about the time of King James the Sixth, a very curious one of the same sort, wherein he describes the peculiarities of many beasts and birds, and the horrid surprise each of them will get when the day of judgment comes on them.—H.

Perhaps Mr Hogg alludes to "The Passage of the Pilgremer," by John Burell, a poem which contains a goodly catalogue of beasts and birds; or, to the "Houlate," another ancient poem.—M.

Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel' shall mourn
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, pity strays forlorn,
Frae man exil'd.

Ye hills, near neebors o' the starns,
That proudly cock your cresting cairns!
Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing earns,
Where echo slumbers!
Come join, ye Nature's sturdiest bairns,
My wailing numbers!*

Mourn, ilka grove the cushat kens!
Ye haz'lly shaws and briery dens!
Ye burnies, wimplin down your glens,
Wi' toddlin din,
Or foaming strang, wi' hasty stens,
Frae lin to lin.

Mourn, little harebells o'er the lee;
Ye stately foxgloves fair to see;
Ye woodbines, hanging bonnilie
In scented bow'rs;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
The first o' flow'rs.

At dawn, when ev'ry grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at his head,

* Some affect to deny that Burns had a deep sympathy with external nature, or excelled in description. This poem, we think, shows the contrary. In one of his letters to Mrs Dunlop, he thus beautifully expresses himself on the same subject. "I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain daisy, the hare-bell, the fox-glove, the wild brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never heard the loud solitary whistle of the curlew on a summer morn, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plovers, in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul, like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry." —M.

At ev'n, when beans their fragrance shed,
I' th' rustling gale,
Ye maukins whiddin thro' the glade,
Come join my wail.

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood;
Ye grouse that crap the heather bud;
Ye curlews calling thro' a clud;
Ye whistling plover;
And mourn, ye whirring paitrick brood;
He's gane for ever!

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals;
Ye fisher herons, watching eels;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
Circling the lake;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
Rair for his sake.

Mourn, clam'ring craiks at close o' day,
Mang fields o' flow'ring clover gay;
And when ye wing your annual way
Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warlds, wha lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

Ye houlets, frae your ivy bow'r,
In some auld tree, or eldritch tow'r,
What time the moon, wi' silent glow'r,
Sets up her horn,
Wail thro' the dreary midnight hour
Till waukrife morn!

O rivers, forests, hills, and plains!
Oft have ye heard my canty strains:
But now, what else for me remains
But tales of woe;

And frae my een the drapping rains
Maun ever flow.

Mourn spring, thou darling of the year!
Ilk cowslip cup shall kep a tear:
Thou simmer, while each corny spear
Shoots up its head,
Thy gay, green, flow'ry tresses shear,
For him that's dead!

Thou autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
In grief thy sallow mantle tear!
Thou winter hurling thro' the air
The roaring blast,
Wide o'er the naked world declare
The worth we've lost!

Mourn him, thou sun, great source of light!
Mourn empress of the silent night!
And you, ye twinkling starnies bright,
My Matthew mourn!
For through your orbs he's ta'en his flight,
Ne'er to return.

O Henderson! the man! the brother!
And art thou gone, and gone for ever!
And hast thou crost that unknown river,
Life's dreary bound!
Like thee, where shall I find another,
The world around!

Go to your sculptur'd tombs, ye Great,
In a' the tinsel trash o' state!
But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
Thou man of worth!
And weep the ae best fellow's fate
E'er lay in earth.

THE EPITAPH.

Stop, passenger! my story's brief;
And truth I shall relate, man;
I tell nae common tale o' grief,
For Matthew was a great man.

If thou uncommon merit hast,
Yet spurn'd at fortune's door, man;
A look of pity hither cast,
For Matthew was a poor man.

If thou a noble sodger art,
That passest by this grave, man;
There moulders here a gallant heart,
For Matthew was a brave man.

If thou on men, their works and ways,
Canst throw uncommon light, man;
Here lies wha weel had won thy praise,
For Matthew was a bright man.

If thou at friendship's sacred ca'
Wad life itself resign, man;
Thy sympathetic tear maun fa',
For Matthew was a kind man!

If thou art staunch without a stain,
Like the unchanging blue, man;
This was a kinsman o' thy ain,
For Matthew was a true man.

If thou hast wit, and fun, and fire,
And ne'er guid wine did fear, man;
This was thy billie, dam, and sire,
For Matthew was a queer man.

If ony whiggish whingin sot,
To blame poor Matthew dare, man;
May dool and sorrow be his lot,
For Matthew was a rare man.

TO MISS LOGAN, WITH BEATTIE'S POEMS

AS A NEW YEAR'S GIFT, Jan. 1, 1787.*

AGAIN the silent wheels of time
Their annual round have driv'n,
And you, tho' scarce in maiden prime,
Are so much nearer Heav'n.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
The infant year to hail;
I send you more than India boasts
In Edwin's simple tale.

Our sex with guile and faithless love
Is charg'd, perhaps, too true;
But may, dear maid, each lover prove
An Edwin still to you!

* This lady was the sister of Major Logan, to whom the poet has an epistle. The verses are sweet and elegant.—M.

TAM O' SHANTER,*

A TALE.

Of Brownyis and of Bogilis full is this Buke.
GAWIN DOUGLAS.

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
And folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy
And getting fou and unco happy,
We thinkna on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

* Of all the funny poems of Burns, this is my favourite one. It was the first of his that I ever heard, and it still remains highest in my estimation, which may in some measure be owing to the supreme youthful delight with which I first heard it. Though I have related the anecdote somewhere else, I may mention here, that in the summer of 1797, there was a man named John Scott, a great original, but accounted "rather harum-scarum ways," came to me on the summer hill. He had taken a fancy to me, and thought nothing of coming five or six miles out to the wild hills to visit, and well did I like to see him coming, he had so many songs and stories of all sorts. Among other things he recited *Tam o' Shanter* to me one day, and it is impossible to describe the delight and amusement that I experienced. I made Jock sit down and repeat it over and over to me until I learned it by heart. That was the first hour I ever heard any thing about Burns; I had heard an old man once mention his name, but all that he could or would tell me of him was, "Humph! where hae ye been a' your days that ye never heard o' Burns?" From that day to this I have regarded Tam o' Shanter as an inimitable poem. —H.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,*
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonny lasses.)

* Regarding the identity of the hero of the tale, the following conclusive evidence is submitted to the reader.

SWINDRIDGE MUIR, 13*th January*, 1829.

SIR,

As I understand you wish to be informed of what I know of the identity of the person designated Tam o' Shanter in Burns' celebrated poem of that name, I shall cheerfully communicate all I know on the subject. Having met with the poet at the house of Sir W. Cunningham of Robertland, which I was frequently in the way of doing, he (Burns) at request produced the poem. All the company present seemed to have some previous knowledge of it excepting myself. I asked who was the person therein represented as *Tam*. Burns replied, "Who could it be but the guidman o' Shanter?—a man well acquainted with the freaks and pranks of the infernal crew;" and in the course of conversation I found this person to be (Dugald, as I then thought, but have since learned) Douglas Grahame. This was previous to his having sent a copy to Captain Grose, for whom it was particularly intended. Next morning I received a copy from the poet himself; and to the best of my recollection there was also present at the time the late Dr Hamilton, Kilmarnock, and Dr M'Kenzie, then in Mauchline, now in Edinburgh. And I am, Sir, Yours, &c.

JOHN SMITH.

To MR DAVID AULD,
Merchant, Ayr.

FROM MAJOR W. NEILL OF BARNWELL.

AYR, 28*th January*, 1829.

MR DAVID AULD,

SIR,—In corroboration of what Mr Smith states relating to the identity of Tam o' Shanter, I have had a conversation with Mrs Jean Doak, a person of great respectability; she was brought up with an aunt, who lived at the farm of Forncalloch in the neighbourhood of Kirkoswald. She was there at the time Burns attended Mr Rodger's school at Kirkoswald, and resided with his uncle Mr Samuel Brown in Ballochmyle.

Douglas Grahame, then, and for some time afterwards, lived in the farm of Shanter. He was currently known in the neighbour-

O Tam! had'st thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market day thou wasna sober;

hood as the *Tam* of the poet; an appellation, however, that no one durst apply to his face, as whatever honour may be supposed to attach to it now, it was not a joke at all relished by the honest farmer. She has known Shanter all her life, and never recollects a person of the name of Thomas Reid tenant in it.

I am, dear Sir,
Your most obed. Servant,
WILLIAM NEILL.

"Tam o' Shanter was an individual named Douglas Graham, a Carrick farmer. Shanter is a farm on the Carrick shore, near Kirkoswald, which Graham long possessed. The man was in sober, or rather drunken truth, the 'bletherin', blusterin' blellum' that the poet has described; and his wife was as veritably a lady who most anxiously discouraged drinking in her husband. Burns, when a boy, spent some time at Kirkoswald, in the house of a maternal uncle, who at once practised the craft of a miller, and sold home-brewed ale. To this house, Graham and his brother-in-law, the farmer of Duquhat (which lies between Kirkoswald and Shanter), used to resort; and finding in Burns some qualities, which, boy as he was, recommended him to their attention, they made him every thing but their drinking companion. Sometimes the two toppers, tired of ale, which they said was rather cold for the stomach, would adjourn to Duquhat, and correct their native liquor with good brandy, which at that time was supplied by smugglers to every house in Carrick at a price next to nominal. Burns would accompany them in these migrations, an observant boy, inspecting the actions of his dotard seniors. After perhaps spending half a night at Duquhat, the farmer of that place, with Burns, would accompany Graham to Shanter; but as the idea of the 'sulky sullen dame' rose in their minds, a debate would arise as to the propriety of venturing, even in full strength, into the house, and Graham, perhaps, would, after all, return to Duquhat, and continue the debauch till next day, content to put off the present evil, even at the hazard of encountering it in an accumulated form afterwards. Such were the opportunities afforded to the poet of observing the life of the Carrick farmers of those days."—*Chambers.*

That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on;
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirton Jean till Monday.
She prophesy'd, that late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon!
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And aye the ale was growing better;
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious:
The souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam didna mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himself amang the nappy:
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure;

Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed!
Or like the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.—
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattlin show'rs rose on the blast:
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd;
That night, a child might understand,
The deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glowring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway * was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.—

* "Alloway Kirk, with its little inclosed burial-ground, has long been roofless, but the walls are pretty well preserved, and it still

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd ;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane ;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn ;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.—
Before him Doon pours all his floods ;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods !
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll ;

retains its bell at the east end. Upon the whole, the spectator is struck with the idea that the witches must have had a rather narrow stage for the performance of their revels, as described in the poem. The inner area is now divided by a partition wall, and one part forms the family burial-place of the late Mr Cathcart, who may perhaps be better known by his judicial designation of Lord Alloway. The 'winnock bunker in the east,' where sat the awful musician of the party, is a conspicuous feature, being a small window, divided by a thick mullion. Around the building are the vestiges of other openings, at any of which the hero of the tale may be supposed to have looked in upon the hellish scene. Within the last few years, the old oaken rafters of the kirk were mostly entire, but they have now been entirely taken away, to form, in various shapes, memorials of a place so remarkably signalized by genius. It is necessary for those who survey the ground in reference to the poem, to be informed that the old road from Ayr to this spot, by which Burns supposed his hero to have approached Alloway Kirk, was considerably to the west of the present one, which, nevertheless, has existed since before the time of Burns. Upon a field about a quarter of a mile to the north-west of the kirk, is a single tree inclosed with a paling, the last remnant of a group which covered

'——————the cairn
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;'

and immediately beyond that object is

'——————the foord,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd,'

(namely, a ford over a small burn which soon after joins the Doon); being two places which Tam o' Shanter is described as having passed on his solitary way. The road then made a sweep

When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze ;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing ;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.—

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn !
What dangers thou canst make us scorn !
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil ;
Wi' usquabae we'll face the devil !—
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light ;
And wow ! Tam saw an unco sight !
Warlocks and witches in a dance ;
Nae cotillion brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
At winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast ;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge :
He screw'd his pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—

towards the river, and passing a well which trinkles down into the Doon, where formerly stood a thorn, on which an individual, called in the poem 'Mungo's mother,' committed suicide, approached Alloway Kirk upon the west. These circumstances may here appear trivial, but it is surprising with what interest any visitor to the real scene will inquire into, and behold every part of it which can be associated, however remotely, with the poem of Tam o' Shanter. In the churchyard rests William Burns, father of the poet, over whose grave the son had piously raised a small stone, recording his name and the date of his death, together with the short poetical tribute to his memory which is copied in the works of the bard. But for this monument, long ago destroyed and carried away piece-meal, there is now substituted one of somewhat finer proportions."—*Chambers.*

Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantrip slight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light,—
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;
Twa span-lang, wee unchristen'd bairns;
A thief new-cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape:
Five tomahawks, wi bluid red-rusted;
Five scimitars wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The gray hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam! had they been queens,
A' plump and strapping in their teens;
Their sarks instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gien them aff my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!

Drawn by W.B.Scott.

Engraved by R.Scott.

TAM O' SHANTER.

Published by A.Fullarton & C°. Glasgow.

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Lowping and flinging on a cummock,
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kenn'd what was what fu' brawlie,
'There was ae winsome wench and walie,'*
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kenn'd on Carrick shore!
For monie a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonnie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear.)
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.—
Ah! little kenn'd thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots, ('twas a' her riches,)
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my muse her wing maun cour;
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r:
To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
(A souple jade she was and strang,)
And how Tam stood like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main,
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant a' was dark:
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

* This is a line in Ramsay's Tale of Three Bonnets.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow
Wi' mony an eldritch skreech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! Ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane* of the brig;
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they daurna cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake!

* It is a well-known fact, that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller, that when he falls in with *bogles*, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.

"The Auld Brig of Doon, which is approached by a steep way, forming Tam's line of march when pursued by the witches, and which is connected with the road by a sharp turn that may be conceived to have given that hero some trouble in a gallop, is a fine old arch, of apparently very durable workmanship, and, though disused, except for foot passengers, is kept in excellent order. Two or three years ago the parapets had suffered considerable injury by many of the coping-stones being thrown into the water by idle boys; but at the instigation of Mr David Auld, of Ayr, a poetical petition to the Trustees was written by the Rev. Mr Paul, of Broughton, author of a Life of Burns, with the view of obtaining the means of repairing it. On this document being presented to a meeting of the Trustees at Ayr, it was found that they had no power to devote the public money to the repair of a disused road; but the eight or ten gentlemen present were so much amused by the petition, and, at the same time, so convinced

For Nannie far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:

by its arguments, that they subscribed on the spot a sum sufficient to put all to rights. The document is here subjoined in full form:

Unto the Honourable, the Trustees of the Roads, in the County of Ayr; the Petition and Complaint of the Auld Brig of Doon.

MUST I, like modern fabrics of a day,
Decline unwept, the victim of decay?
Shall my bold arch, that proudly stretches o'er
Doon's classic streams, from Kyle to Carrick's shore,
Be suffer'd in oblivion's gulf to fall,
And hurl to wreck my venerable wall?
Forbid it! every tutelary power!
That guards my key-stane at the midnight hour;
Forbid it! ye who charm'd by Burns's lay,
Amid these scenes can linger out the day!
Let Nannie's sark, and Maggie's mangled tail,
Plead in my cause, and in that cause prevail.
The man of taste who comes my form to see,
And curious asks, but asks in vain for me,
With tears of sorrow will my fate deplore,
When he is told, "The Auld Brig is no more."
Stop then, O stop, the more than Vandal rage,
That marks this revolutionary age,
And bid the structure of your fathers last,
The pride of this, the boast of ages past;
Nor ever let your children's children tell,
"By your decree, the fine Old Fabric fell."

May it therefore please your Honours to consider this Petition, and grant such sum as you may think proper, for repairing and keeping up the Auld Brig of Doon.

(Signed) DAVID AULD,
For the Petitioner.

The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.*

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son, take heed :
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

* "It is not easy, even for the actual writer of a fiction, to point out the skeleton ideas and incidents, the shadowy fragments of original and real life, which he has used in composing his work, and any task of this kind must, of course, be still more difficult in another party, writing at the distance of a generation. Among the facts, however, which must have gone to the composition of 'Tam o' Shanter,' there is one, never yet noticed, which probably suggested the tail-piece with which the diabolic panorama is concluded. Douglas Graham had, it seems, a good grey mare, which was very much identified with his own appearance. One day, being in Ayr, he tied the animal to a ring at the door of a public-house, where, contrary to his original intentions, he tarried so long, that the boys, in the meantime, plucked away the whole of his mare's tail, for the purpose of making fishing-lines. It was not till next morning, when he awoke from a protracted bouse, that the circumstance was discovered by his son, who came in crying that the mare had lost her tail. Graham, when he comprehended the amount of the disaster, was, it seems, so much bewildered as to its cause, that he could only attribute it, after a round oath, to the agency of witches. There can be no doubt, we think, that this affair, working in Burns's recollection, was seized upon to serve as the catastrophe to a story, of which the main part, it is well known, was a fire-side legend, respecting a person of unknown name and character."—*Chambers.*

We subjoin a few extracts, which cannot fail to be interesting—as recording the sentiments of our most eminent critics regarding the foregoing remarkable poem.

In reference to this poem, Wordsworth, in his "Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns," London 1816, says, "Permit me to remind you, that it is the privilege of poetic genius to catch, under certain restrictions, of which perhaps at the time of its being exerted it is but dimly conscious, a spirit of pleasure wherever it can be found,—in the walks of nature, and in the business of men. The poet, trusting to primary instincts, luxuriates among the felicities of love and wine, and is enraptured while he describes the

fiercer aspects of war; nor does he shrink from the company of the passion, though immoderate—from convivial pleasure, though intemperate—nor from the presence of war, though savage, and recognised as the handmaid of desolation. Frequently and admirably has Burns given way to these impulses of nature, both with reference to himself, and in describing the condition of others. Who but some impenetrable dunce or narrow-minded puritan in works of art, ever read without delight the picture which he has drawn of the convivial exaltation of the rustic adventurer Tam o' Shanter? The poet fears not to tell the reader in the outset that his hero was a desperate and sottish drunkard, whose excesses were frequent as his opportunities. This reprobate sits down to his cups, while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion;—the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence—selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality—and, while these various elements of humanity are blended into one proud and happy composition of elated spirits, the anger of the tempest without doors only heightens and sets off the enjoyment within. I pity him who cannot perceive, that in all this, though there was no moral purpose, there is a moral effect.

> "Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
> O'er a' the *ills* of life victorious."

What a lesson do these words convey of charitable indulgence for the vicious habits of the principal actor in this scene, and of those who resemble him!—men who, to the rigidly virtuous, are objects almost of loathing, and whom therefore they cannot serve."

"Of his pieces of humour," says Jeffrey in the Edinburgh Review, "the tale of Tam o' Shanter is probably the best: though there are traits of infinite merit in Scotch Drink, the Holy Fair, the Halloween, and several of the songs; in all of which it is very remarkable that he rises occasionally into a strain of beautiful description or lofty sentiment far above the pitch of the original conception."

"*Tam o' Shanter*—a piece which no one can understand without believing, that had Burns pursued that walk, and poured out his stores of traditionary lore, embellished with his extraordinary powers of description of all kinds, we might have had from his hand a series of national tales, uniting the quaint simplicity, sly humour, and irresistible pathos of another Chaucer, with the strong and graceful versification, and masculine wit and sense of another Dryden."—*Lockhart.*

"Burns has given the extremes of licentious eccentricity and convivial enjoyment in the story of this scape-grace, and of pa-

triarchal simplicity and gravity, in describing the old national character of the Scottish peasantry."—*Hazlitt.*

"Burns has given an elixir of life to his native dialect. The Scottish Tam o' Shanter will be read as long as any production of the same century. The impression of his genius is deep and universal; and, viewing him merely as a poet, there is scarcely any other regret connected with his name than that his productions, with all their merit, fall short of the talents which he possessed. That he never attempted any great work of fiction or invention may be partly traced to the cast of his genius, and partly to his circumstances and defective education. His poetical temperament was that of fitful transports rather than steady inspiration."—*Campbell.*

"Into Tam o' Shanter, Burns has poured the whole witchery of song,—humorous, gay, gloomy, terrific, and sublime."—*Ibid.*

"In the inimitable tale of Tam o' Shanter, he has left us sufficient evidence of his ability to combine the ludicrous with the awful and even the horrible. No poet, with the exception of Shakspeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions. His humorous description of the appearance of Death, in the poem of Dr Hornbook, borders on the terrific, and the witches' dance in the Kirk of Alloway is at once ludicrous and horrible."—*Sir W. Scott.*

The late Professor Walker, in his observations on Burns's writings, adds his meed of praise to this admirable poem. "If we do not find in Burns indications of a regular and progressive improvement, we are certainly still farther from finding any thing of a contrary nature. Tam o' Shanter, one of his latest compositions, is also one of the most perfect and of the best sustained in the whole collection, combining, as an excellent critic has observed, the comic archness of Prior with the terrific sublimity of Shakspeare."

ON THE LATE CAPTAIN GROSE'S

PEREGRINATIONS THROUGH SCOTLAND,

COLLECTING THE ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM.

HEAR, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groat's;
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede you tent it:
A chield's amang you taking notes,
And, faith, he'll prent it.

If in your bounds ye chance to light
Upon a fine, fat, fodgel wight,
O' stature short, but genius bright,
That's he, mark weel—
And wow! he has an unco slight
O' cauk and keel.

By some auld, houlet-haunted biggin,*
Or kirk deserted by its riggin,
It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in
Some eldritch part,
Wi' deils, they say, Lord save's! colleaguin
At some black art.—

Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or chaumer,
Ye gipsy-gang that deal in glamour,
And you deep-read in hell's black grammar,
Warlocks and witches;
Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer,
Ye midnight bitches.

It's tauld he was a sodger bred,
And ane wad rather fa'n than fled;

* Vide his Antiquities of Scotland.

But now he's quat the spurtle blade,
And dog-skin wallet,
And ta'en the Antiquarian trade,
I think they call it.

He has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets:
Rusty airn caps and jinglin jackets,*
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,
A towmont guid;
And parritch-pats, and auld saut-backets,
Before the Flood.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder;
Auld Tubalcain's fire-shool and fender;
That which distinguished the gender
O' Balaam's ass;
A broom-stick o' the witch of Endor,
Weel shod wi' brass.

Forbye, he'll shape you aff, fu' gleg,
The cut of Adam's philibeg
The knife that nicket Abel's craig,
He'll prove you fully,
It was a faulding jocteleg,
Or lang-kail gullie.—

But wad ye see him in his glee,
For meikle glee and fun has he,
Then set him down, and twa or three
Guid fellows wi' him;
And port, O port! shine thou a wee,
And then ye'll see him!

Now, by the pow'rs o' verse and prose!
Thou art a dainty chiel, O Grose!—

* Vide his treatise on ancient armour and weapons.

Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
They sair misca' thee;
I'd take the rascal by the nose,
Wad say, shame fa' thee!

TO MISS CRUIKSHANKS,

A VERY YOUNG LADY.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A BOOK, PRESENTED TO HER BY THE AUTHOR.

Beautrous rose-bud, young and gay,
Blooming on thy early May,
Never may'st thou, lovely flow'r,
Chilly shrink in sleety show'r!
Never Boreas' hoary path,
Never Eurus' pois'nous breath,
Never baleful stellar lights,
Taint thee with untimely blights!
Never, never reptile thief
Riot on thy virgin leaf!
Nor even Sol too fiercely view
Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

May'st thou long, sweet crimson gem,
Richly deck thy native stem;
Till some ev'ning, sober, calm,
Dropping dews, and breathing balm,
While all around the woodland rings,
And ev'ry bird thy requiem sings;
Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
Shed thy dying honours round,
And resign to parent earth
The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.

ON READING, IN A NEWSPAPER,

THE DEATH OF JOHN M'LEOD, Esq,

BROTHER TO A YOUNG LADY, A PARTICULAR FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR'S.

Sad thy tale, thou idle page,
And rueful thy alarms:
Death tears the brother of her love
From Isabella's arms.

Sweetly deckt with pearly dew
The morning rose may blow;
But cold successive noontide blasts
May lay its beauties low.

Fair on Isabella's morn
The sun propitious smil'd;
But, long ere noon, succeeding clouds
Succeeding hopes beguil'd.

Fate oft tears the bosom chords
That nature finest strung:
So Isabella's heart was form'd,
And so that heart was wrung.

Dread Omnipotence, alone,
Can heal the wound he gave;
Can point the brimful grief-worn eyes
To scenes beyond the grave.

Virtue's blossoms there shall blow,
And fear no withering blast;
There Isabella's spotless worth
Shall happy be at last.

ON THE BIRTH OF A POSTHUMOUS CHILD,

BORN IN PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF FAMILY DISTRESS.

Sweet Flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' mony a pray'r,
What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
Sae helpless, sweet, and fair!

November hirples o'er the lea,
Chill, on thy lovely form;
And gane, alas! the shelt'ring tree,
Should shield thee frae the storm.

May He who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to blaw,
Protect thee frae the driving show'r,
The bitter frost and snaw!

May He, the friend of woe and want,
Who heals life's various stounds,
Protect and guard the mother plant,
And heal her cruel wounds!

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer morn:
Now feebly bends she in the blast,
Unshelter'd and forlorn:

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
Unscath'd by ruffian hand!
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land!

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM CREECH,

BOOKSELLER, EDINBURGH.*

AULD chuckie, Reekie's † sair distrest,
Down droops her ance weel burnish't crest,
Nae joy her bonnie buskit nest
Can yield ava,
Her darling bird that she lo'es best,
Willie's awa!

* The above rhyming epistle was accompanied with the following letter:

SELKIRK, 13th *May*, 1787.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

THE enclosed I have just wrote, nearly extempore, in a solitary Inn in Selkirk, after a miserable wet day's riding.—I have been over most of East Lothian, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Selkirkshires; ‡ and next week I begin a tour through the north of England. Yesterday I dined with Lady Harriot, sister to my noble patron, § *Quem Deus conservet!* I would write till I would tire you as much with dull prose as I dare say by this time you are with wretched verse, but I am jaded to death; so, with a grateful farewell,

I have the honour to be,
Good Sir, yours sincerely.

---

† Edinburgh. § James, Earl of Glencairn.

‡ I have often heard Dr Clarkson tell, with a heavy heart and a loss of all patience with himself, that when Mr Ainslie and Burns arrived at Selkirk that evening, "they were just like twa droukit craws." The Dr and other two gentlemen were sitting in Vietch's Inn, near the West Port taking their glass, (for Selkirk has a West Port as well as Edinburgh.) When the travellers arrived, the two within viewed them out at the window as they alighted, and certainly conceived no very high opinion of them. In a short time, however, they sent Mr Vietch in to the Dr and his friends, requesting permission for two strangers to take a glass with them. The Dr objected; and asked Mr

O Willie was a witty wight,
And had o' things an unco' slight;
Auld Reekie aye he keepit tight,
And trig and braw:
But now they'll busk her like a fright,
Willie's awa!

The stiffest o' them a' he bow'd,
The bauldest o' them a' he cow'd;
They durst nae mair than he allow'd,
That was a law:
We've lost a birkie weel worth gowd,
Willie's awa!

Now gawkies, tawpies, gowks and fools,
Frae colleges and boarding schools,
May sprout like simmer puddock-stools
In glen or shaw;
He wha could brush them down to mools,
Willie's awa!

The brethren o' the Commerce-Chaumer*
May mourn their loss wi' doolfu' clamour;
He was a dictionar and grammar
Amang them a';
I fear they'll now mak mony a stammer,
Willie's awa!

Vietch what the men were like? Mr Vietch said, he could not well say; the one spoke *rather* like a gentleman, but the other was a drover-looking chap; so they refused to admit them, sending them word ben the house that they were sorry they were engaged elsewhere, and obliged to go away. The Dr saw them ride off next morning, and it was not till the third day that he knew it had been the celebrated Scottish poet whom they had refused to admit. That refusal hangs about the Dr's heart like a dead weight to this day, and will do till the day of his death, for the bard had not a more enthusiastic admirer. H.

* The Chamber of Commerce of Edinburgh, of which Mr C. was Secretary.

Nae mair we see his levee door
Philosophers and Poets pour,*
And toothy critics by the score,
In bloody raw!
The adjutant o' a' the core,
Willie's awa!

Now worthy Gregory's Latin face,
Tytler's and Greenfield's modest grace;
M'Kenzie, Stuart, such a brace
As Rome ne'er saw;
They a' maun meet some ither place,
Willie's awa!

Poor Burns—e'en Scotch drink canna quicken,
He cheeps like some bewilder'd chicken
Scar'd frae it's minnie and the cleckin
By hoodie-craw;
Grief's gi'en his heart an unco kickin',
Willie's awa!

Now ev'ry sour-mou'd girnin' blellum,
And Calvin's fock, are fit to fell him;
And self-conceited critic skellum
His quill may draw;
He wha could brawlie ward their bellum,
Willie's awa!

Up wimpling stately Tweed I've sped,
And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
And Ettrick banks now roaring red
While tempests blaw;
But every joy and pleasure's fled,
Willie's awa!

* Many literary gentlemen were accustomed to meet at M. Creech's house at breakfast. Burns often met with them there, when he called, and hence the name of *Levee*.

May I be slander's common speech;
A text for infamy to preach;
And lastly, streekit out to bleach
In winter snaw;
When I forget thee! WILLIE CREECH,
Tho' far awa!

May never wicked fortune touzle him!
May never wicked men bamboozle him!
Until a pow as auld's Methusalem,
He canty claw!
Then to the blessed New Jerusalem,
Fleet wing awa!

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ. MAUCHLINE.

(RECOMMENDING A BOY.)

MOSSGIEL, *May* 3, 1786.

I HOLD it, Sir, my bounden duty
To warn you how that Master Tootie,
Alias, Laird M'Gaun,*
Was here to hire yon lad away
'Bout whom ye spak the tither day,
And wad hae don't aff han':
But lest he learn the callan tricks,
As faith I muckle doubt him,
Like scrapin' out auld Crummie's nicks
And tellin' lies about them;

* *Master Tootie* then lived in Mauchline; a dealer in cows. It was his common practice to cut the nicks or markings from the horns of cattle, to disguise their age.—He was an artful trick-contriving character; hence he is called a *Snick-drawer.* In the Poet's "*Address to the Deil,*" he styles that august personage an *auld, snick-drawing* dog!

As lieve then I'd have then,
Your clerkship he should sair,
If sae be, ye may be
Not fitted otherwhere.

Altho' I say't, he's gleg enough,
And 'bout a house that's rude and rough,
The boy might learn to swear;
But then wi' you, he'll be sae taught,
And get sic fair example straught,
I hae na ony fear.
Ye'll catechize him every quirk,
And shore him weel wi' hell;
And gar him follow to the kirk——
—Aye when ye gang yoursel.
If ye then, maun be then
Frae hame this comin Friday;
Then please sir, to lea'e sir,
The orders wi' your lady.

My word of honour I hae gien,
In Paisley John's, that night at e'en,
To meet the warld's worm;
To try to get the twa to gree,
And name the airles and the fee,
In legal mode and form:
I ken he weel a Snick can draw,
When simple bodies let him;
And if a Devil be at a',
In faith he's sure to get him.
To phrase you and praise you,
Ye ken your Laureat scorns;
The pray'r still, you share still,
Of grateful MINSTREL BURNS.

TO Mr M'ADAM, OF CRAIGEN-GILLAN,

IN ANSWER TO AN OBLIGING LETTER HE SENT IN THE COMMENCEMENT OF MY POETIC CAREER.

Sir, o'er a gill I gat your card,
I trow it made me proud;
See wha taks notice o' the bard!
I lap and cry'd fu' loud.

Now deil-ma-care about their jaw,
The senseless, gawky million;
I'll cock my nose aboon them a',
I'm roos'd by Craigen-Gillan!

'Twas noble, Sir; 'twas like yoursel,
To grant your high protection:
A great man's smile ye ken fu' weel,
Is aye a blest infection.

Tho', by his * banes wha in a tub
Match'd Macedonian Sandy!
On my ain legs thro' dirt and dub,
I independent stand aye.—

And when those legs to gude warm kail,
Wi' welcome canna bear me;
A lee dyke-side, a sybow-tail,
And barley-scone shall cheer me.

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
O' mony flow'ry simmers!
And bless your bonnie lasses baith,
I'm tald they're loosome kimmers!

And God bless young Dunaskin's laird,
The blossom of our gentry!
And may he wear an auld man's beard,
A credit to his country.

* Diogenes.

TO CAPTAIN RIDDEL, GLENRIDDEL.

(EXTEMPORE LINES ON RETURNING A NEWSPAPER.)

ELLISLAND, *Monday Evening.*

YOUR news and review, Sir, I've read through and through,
With little admiring or blaming: [Sir,
The papers are barren of home-news or foreign,
No murders or rapes worth the naming.

Our friends the reviewers, those chippers and hewers,
Are judges of mortar and stone, Sir;
But of meet, or unmeet, in a fabrick complete,
I'll boldly pronounce they are none, Sir.

My goose-quill too rude is to tell all your goodness
Bestow'd on your servant, the Poet;
Would to God I had one like a beam of the sun,
And then all the world, Sir, should know it!

TO TERRAUGHTY,* ON HIS BIRTH-DAY.

HEALTH to the Maxwells' vet'ran Chief!
Health, aye unsour'd by care or grief:
Inspir'd, I turn'd Fate's sibyl leaf,
This natal morn,
I see thy life is stuff o' prief,
Scarce quite half worn.—

This day thou metes threescore eleven,
And I can tell that bounteous Heaven

* Mr Maxwell, of Terraughty, near Dumfries.

(The second sight, ye ken, is given
To ilka POET)
On thee a tack o' seven times seven
Will yet bestow it.

If envious buckies view wi' sorrow,
Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
May desolation's lang teeth'd harrow,
Nine miles an hour,
Rake them, like Sodom and Gomorrah,
In brunstane stoure—

But for thy friends, and they are mony,
Baith honest men and lasses bonnie,
May couthie fortune, kind and cannie,
In social glee,
Wi' mornings blythe and e'enings funny,
Bless them and thee!

Fareweel, auld birkie! Lord be near ye,
And then the deil he daurna steer ye:
Your friends aye love, your faes aye fear ye,
For me, shame fa' me,
If neist my heart I dinna wear ye,
While BURNS they ca' me.

TO A LADY,*

WITH A PRESENT OF A PAIR OF DRINKING GLASSES.

FAIR Empress of the Poet's soul,
And Queen of Poetesses;
Clarinda, take this little boon,
This humble pair of glasses.—

* Mrs M'Lehose.

And fill them high with generous juice,
As generous as your mind;
And pledge me in the generous toast—
"The whole of human kind!"

"To those who love us!"—second fill;
But not to those whom we love;
Lest we love those who love not us!—
A third—"to thee and me, love!"

TRAGIC FRAGMENT.

In my early years nothing less would serve me than courting the tragic Muse.—I was, I think, about eighteen or nineteen when I sketched the outlines of a tragedy forsooth; but the bursting of a cloud of family misfortunes, which had for some time threatened us, prevented my farther progress. In those days I never wrote down any thing; so, except a speech or two, the whole has escaped my memory.—The following, which I most distinctly remember, was an exclamation from a great character—great in occasional instances of generosity, and daring at times in villanies. He is supposed to meet with a child of misery, and exclaims to himself:—

"All devil as I am, a damned wretch,
A harden'd, stubborn, unrepenting villain,
Still my heart melts at human wretchedness;
And with sincere tho' unavailing sighs,
I view the helpless children of distress.
With tears indignant I behold th' oppressor
Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,
Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime.
Even you, ye helpless crew, I pity you;
Ye, whom the seeming good think sin to pity;
Ye poor, despis'd, abandon'd vagabonds,
Whom vice, as usual, has turn'd o'er to ruin.
—O, but for kind, tho' ill-requited friends,
I had been driven forth like you forlorn,
The most detested, worthless wretch among you!"

THE VOWELS:

A TALE.

'Twas where the birch and sounding thong are ply'd,
The noisy domicile of pedant pride;
Where ignorance her dark'ning vapour throws,
And cruelty directs the thick'ning blows;
Upon a time, Sir Abece the great,
In all his pedagogic powers elate,
His awful chair of state resolves to mount,
And call the trembling vowels to account.—
First enter'd A, a grave, broad, solemn wight,
But, ah! deform'd, dishonest to the sight!
His twisted head look'd backward on his way,
And flagrant from the scourge he grunted, ai!
Reluctant, E stalk'd in; with piteous race
The justling tears ran down his honest face!
That name, that well-worn name, and all his own,
Pale he surrenders at the tyrant's throne!
The Pedant stifles keen, the Roman sound
Not all his mongrel diphthongs can compound;
And next the title following close behind,
He to the nameless, ghastly wretch assign'd.
The cobweb'd gothic dome resounded, Y!
In sullen vengeance, I, disdain'd, reply:
The pedant swung his felon cudgel round,
And knock'd the groaning vowel to the ground!
In rueful apprehension enter'd O,
The wailing minstrel of despairing woe;
Th' Inquisitor of Spain the most expert,
Might there have learnt new mysteries of his art;
So grim, deform'd, with horrors entering U,
His dearest friend and brother scarcely knew!
As trembling U stood staring all aghast,
The pedant in his left hand clutch'd him fast,
In helpless infants' tears he dipp'd his right,
Baptiz'd him eu, and kick'd him from his sight.

SKETCH.*

A LITTLE, upright, pert, tart, tripping wight,
And still his precious self his dear delight:
Who loves his own smart shadow in the streets,
Better than e'er the fairest she he meets.
A man of fashion too, he made his tour,
Learn'd *vive la bagatelle, et vive l'amour;*
So travell'd monkies their grimace improve,
Polish their grin, nay, sigh for ladies' love.
Much specious lore, but little understood;
Veneering oft outshines the solid wood:
His solid sense—by inches you must tell,
But mete his cunning by the old Scots ell;
His meddling vanity, a busy fiend,
Still making work his selfish craft must mend.

AN EXTEMPORANEOUS EFFUSION ON BEING APPOINTED TO THE EXCISE.

SEARCHING auld wives barrels,
Och, hon! the day!
That clarty barm should stain my laurels;
But—what'll ye say!
These muvin' things ca'd wives and weans,
Wad muve the very hearts o' stanes!

* The above sketch seems to be one of a Series intended for a projected work, under the title of "The Poet's Progress." This character was sent as a specimen, accompanied by a letter to Professor Dugald Stewart, in which it is thus noticed. "The fragment beginning, A little, upright, pert, tart, &c., I have not shown to any man living, till I now send it to you. It forms the postulata, the axioms, the definition of a character, which, if it appear at all, shall be placed in a variety of lights. This particular part I send you, merely as a sample of my hand at portrait sketching."

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF BRUAR WATER,*

TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE.

My Lord, I know your noble ear
Woe ne'er assails in vain;
Emboldened thus, I beg you'll hear
Your humble slave complain,
How saucy Phœbus' scorching beams,
In flaming summer pride,
Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
And drink my crystal tide.

The lightly-jumping glowrin trouts,
That thro' my waters play,
If, in their random, wanton spouts,
They near the margin stray;
If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I'm scorching up so shallow,
They're left the whitening stanes amang,
In gasping death to wallow.

Last day I grat wi' spite and teen,
As poet Burns came by,
That, to a bard I should be seen
Wi' half my channel dry;
A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
Even as I was he shor'd me;

* Bruar Falls, in Athole, are exceedingly picturesque and beautiful; but their effect was much impaired by the want of trees and shrubs. Burns being conducted to see them by his friend the Duke of Athole, and having recommended, in the form of this beautiful poetical petition, that they should be invested with that necessary decoration, a plantation has been made along the chasm, and is now far advanced to maturity. Throughout this young forest a walk has been cut, and a number of fantastic little grottoes erected, for the conveniency of those who visit the spot. The river not only makes several distinct falls, but rushes on through a channel whose roughness and haggard sublimity add greatly to the merits of the scene, as an object of interest among tourists.—M.

But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad ador'd me.

Here, foaming down the shelvy rocks,
In twisting strength I rin;
There, high my boiling torrent smokes,
Wild-roaring o'er a linn:
Enjoying large each spring and well
As nature gave them me,
I am, altho' I say't mysel,
Worth gaun a mile to see.

Would then my noble master please
To grant my highest wishes,
He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees,
And bonnie spreading bushes;
Delighted doubly then, my Lord,
You'll wander on my banks,
And listen mony a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.

The sober laverock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowdspink, music's gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the choir:
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear
The mavis mild and mellow;
The robin pensive autumn cheer,
In all her locks of yellow:

This too a covert shall insure,
To shield them from the storm;
And coward maukin sleep secure,
Low in her grassy form:
Here shall the shepherd make his seat,
To weave his crown of flow'rs;
Or find a shelt'ring safe retreat,
From prone descending show'rs.

And here, by sweet endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising worlds with all their wealth
As empty idle care:
The flow'rs shall vie in all their charms
The hour of heav'n to grace,
And birks extend their fragrant arms
To screen the dear embrace.

Here haply too at vernal dawn,
Some musing bard may stray,
And eye the smoking, dewy lawn,
And misty mountain, grey;
Or by the reaper's nightly beam,
Mild chequering through the trees,
Rave to my darkly dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep bending in the pool,
Their shadows' wat'ry bed!
Let fragrant birks in woodbines drest,
My craggy cliffs adorn;
And for the little songster's nest,
The close embow'ring thorn.

So may old Scotia's darling hope,
Your little angel band,
Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
Their honour'd native land!
So may thro' Albion's farthest ken,
To social-flowing glasses,
The grace be—"Athole's honest men,
And Athole's bonnie lassies!"

DESPONDENCY.

AN ODE.

Oppress'd with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
I sit me down and sigh:
O life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
To wretches such as I!
Dim backward as I cast my view,
What sick'ning scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me thro',
Too justly I may fear!
Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom;
My woes here shall close ne'er,
But with the closing tomb!

Happy, ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
No other view regard!
Ev'n when the wished end's deny'd,
Yet while the busy means are ply'd,
They bring their own reward:
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
Unfitted with an aim,
Meet ev'ry sad returning night,
And joyless morn the same;
You, bustling, and justling,
Forget each grief and pain;
I, listless, yet restless,
Find every prospect vain.

How blest the Solitary's lot,
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,
  Within his humble cell,
The cavern wild with tangling roots,
Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,
  Beside his crystal well!
Or, haply, to his ev'ning thought,
  By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
  A faint collected dream:
    While praising, and raising
      His thoughts to heav'n on high,
    As wand'ring, meand'ring,
      He views the solemn sky.

Than I, no lonely hermit plac'd
Where never human footstep trac'd,
  Less fit to play the part;
The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop, and just to move,
  With self-respecting art:
But ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys,
  Which I too keenly taste,
The Solitary can despise,
  Can want, and yet be blest!
    He needs not, he heeds not,
      Or human love or hate,
    Whilst I here must cry here,
      At perfidy ingrate!

Oh! enviable, early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
  To care, to guilt unknown!
How ill-exchang'd for riper times,
To feel the follies, or the crimes,
  Of others, or my own!

Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnets in the bush,
Ye little know the ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish!
The losses, the crosses,
That active man engage!
The fears all, the tears all,
Of dim declining age!

WINTER,

A DIRGE.

The wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'er-cast,"*
The joyless winter day,
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join,
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Pow'r Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm, I rest, they must be best,
Because they are Thy Will!

* Dr Young.

Then all I want (O, do thou grant
  This one request of mine!)
Since to enjoy thou dost deny,
  Assist me to resign.

ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME,

WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT AT.*

INHUMAN man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
  And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye:
  May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,
  The bitter little that of life remains:
  No more the thick'ning brakes and verdant plains,
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

* This poem, like the most of Burns', is founded in fact. The "fellow" who shot the poor hare is alleged to be a James Thomson, whose father occupied an adjoining farm to that of Ellisland. Of this piece Dr Gregory, to whose critical taste it was submitted, says,—"The wounded hare is a pretty good subject; but the measure you have chosen for it is not a good one; it does not flow well; and the rhyme of the fourth line is almost lost by its distance from the first. Murder-aiming is a bad compound epithet, and not very intelligible; blood-stained has the same fault: bleeding bosom is infinitely better. You have accustomed yourself to such epithets, and have no notion how stiff and quaint they appear to others, and how incongruous with poetic fancy and tender sentiments." The observation of Burns on this passage is highly characteristic. "Dr Gregory is a good man, but he crucifies me: I believe in his iron justice; but, like the devils, I believe and tremble." From the tender feelings expressed in this little piece for the wounded hare, and the indignant terms in which Burns rates its ruthless assailant, it is evident that he was not like the keen sportsman, who, while defending the humanity of

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Oft as by winding Nith, I musing wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON,

ON CROWNING HIS BUST, AT EDNAM, ROXBURGHSHIRE, WITH BAYS.

WHILE virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,
Unfolds her tender mantle green,
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
Or tunes Eolian strains between:

While Summer, with a matron grace,
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
The progress of the spiky blade:

hunting, very coolly maintained, that it being as much the nature of a hare to run away, as of a dog to run after her, consequently the hare must receive as much pleasure from being coursed, as the dog from coursing. This was not Burns' philosophy; like the Prioress of Chaucer, he felt for all inferior animals.

But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous
Caughte in a trappe, if it were ded or bledde.
Of small houndes hadde she that she fedde
With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede;
But sore she wept if on of hem were dede,
Or if men smote it with a yerde smert;
And all was conscience and tender herte.

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
By Tweed erects his aged head,
And sees, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed:

While maniac Winter rages o'er
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows:

So long, sweet Poet of the year,
Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won:
While Scotia, with exulting tear,
Proclaims that THOMSON was her son.

ON SCARING SOME WATER FOWL, IN LOCH-TURIT;

A WILD SCENE AMONG THE HILLS OF OUGHTERTYRE.

WHY, ye tenants of the lake,
For me your watery haunt forsake:
Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
At my presence thus you fly?
Why disturb your social joys,
Parent, filial, kindred ties?
Common friend to you and me,
Nature's gifts to all are free:
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
Busy feed, or wanton lave;
Or, beneath the sheltering rock,
Bide the surging billow's shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace.

Man, your proud usurping foe,
Would be lord of all below:
Plumes himself in Freedom's pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle, from the cliffy brow,
Marking you his prey below,
In his breast no pity dwells,
Strong necessity compels.
But man, to whom alone is giv'n
A ray direct from pitying heav'n,
Glories in his heart humane—
And creatures for his pleasure slain.

In these savage, liquid plains,
Only known to wand'ring swains,
Where the mossy riv'let strays;
Far from human haunts and ways;
All on Nature you depend,
And life's poor season peaceful spend.

Or, if man's superior might,
Dare invade your native right,
On the lofty ether borne,
Man with all his pow'rs you scorn;
Swiftly seek, on clanging wings,
Other lakes and other springs;
And the foe you cannot brave,
Scorn at least to be his slave.

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL,

OVER THE CHIMNEY-PIECE, IN THE PARLOUR OF THE INN AT KENMORE, TAYMOUTH. *

ADMIRING Nature in her wildest grace,
These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;
O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
Th' abodes of covey'd grouse and timid sheep,
My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
Till fam'd Breadalbane opens to my view.—
The meeting cliffs each deep sunk-glen divides,
The woods, wild scatter'd, clothe their ample sides;
Th' outstretching lake, embosom'd 'mong the hills,
The eye with wonder and amazement fills;
The Tay meand'ring sweet in infant pride,
The palace rising on its verdant side;
The lawns wood-fring'd in Nature's native taste:
The hillocks dropt in Nature's careless haste!
The arches striding o'er the new-born stream;
The village, glittering in the noontide beam—

* * * * * * *

Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
Lone wand'ring by the hermit's mossy cell:
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
Th' incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods—

* * * * * * *

Here Poesy might wake her heav'n-taught lyre,
And look through nature with creative fire;
Here, to the wrongs of fate half reconcil'd,
Misfortune's lighten'd steps might wander wild;

* Burns kept a brief journal of his short tours through the north and south of Scotland. At Taymouth, the journal merely has 'described in rhyme.' This alludes to the above verses, some of which, Mr Lockhart justly remarks, are among his best purely English heroics.—M.

And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
Find balm to soothe her bitter rankling wounds:
Here heart-struck Grief might heav'nward stretch her scan,
And injur'd Worth forget and pardon man.

* * * * * * *

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL,

STANDING BY THE FALL OF FYERS, NEAR LOCH-NESS.*

Among the heathy hills and ragged woods,
The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods;
Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
Where, through a shapeless breach, his stream resounds.

* These are vigorous couplets, and it is worth while to compare them with the magnificent description of the same scenery in a storm, by Professor Wilson, in his beautiful article on Streams, published in Blackwood's Magazine.—"Here is solitude with a vengeance—stern grim dungeon solitude! How ghostlike those white skeleton pines, stripped of their rhind by tempest and lightning, and dead to the din of the raging cauldron! That cataract, if descending on a cathedral, would shatter down the pile into a million of fragments. But it meets the black foundations of the cliff, and flies up to the starless heaven in a storm of spray. We are drenched, as if leaning in a hurricane over the gunwale of a ship rolling under bare poles, through a heavy sea. The very solid globe of earth quakes through her entrails. The eye, reconciled to the darkness, now sees a glimmering and gloomy light—and lo, a bridge of a single arch hung across the chasm just high enough to let through the triumphant torrent. Has some hill-loch burst its barrier? For what a world of waters comes now tumbling into the abyss! Niagara! hast thou a fiercer roar? Listen—and you think there are momentary pauses of the thunder, filled up with goblin groans! All the military music bands of the army of Britain would here be dumb as mutes—trumpet, cymbal, and the great drum! There is a desperate temptation in the hubbub to leap into destruction. Water horses and kelpies, keep stabled in your rock stalls—for if you issue forth, the river will sweep you down before you have finished one neigh, to Castle Urquhart, and dash you on a sheet of foam to the top of her rocking battlements. A pretty place indeed for a lunar rain-

As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
As deep recoiling surges foam below,
Prone down the rock the whit'ning sheet descends,
And viewless echo's ear, astonish'd, rends.
Dim-seen, through rising mists, and ceaseless show'rs,
The hoary cavern, wide-surrounding, low'rs.
Still through the gap the struggling river toils,
And still below, the horrid cauldron boils.—

* * * * *

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.*

O THOU, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for ony guid or ill
They've done afore thee!

bow! But the moon has been swept away from heaven, and no brightness may tinge the black firmament that midnight builds over the liquid thunder. What a glorious grave for the last Man! A grave without a resurrection! Oh Nature! Nature! art thou all in all? And is there no God? The astounded spirit shrinks from superstition into atheism—and all creeds are dashed into oblivion, by the appalling war. But a still small voice is heard within the heart—the voice of conscience—and its whisperings shall be heard, when all the waters of the earth are frozen into nothing, and earth itself shrivelled up like a scroll!"

M.

* The hero of this poem, by far the most reprehensible of all Burns's pieces,—and one which he would never have written, had he not forgot his own admirable maxim that—

'An Atheist's laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended,'

was William Fisher,—one of the principal elders of the parish of Mauchline, of which the Rev. Mr Auld was Minister. When the delinquencies of lovers came under the cognizance of the session, the character and extent of his interrogations were thought

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
When thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burnin' and a shinin' light,
To a' this place.

to indicate very unequivocally both the harshness and the fleshliness of his own mind. But though sufficiently distinguished for an ostentatious profession, he was by no means equally so for the correctness and purity of his walk and conversation. He appears to have been one of those, who seek to 'make a gain of godliness;' and though too much a miser to be a habitual drunkard, he too often indulged to excess when he could do so without cost. At a late period of his life, it is reported that his selfish propensities so wofully prevailed, as to make him appropriate to himself a portion of the poor's funds committed to his trust. The circumstances of his death were melancholy and discreditable; for having, on a visit to Mauchline, drank to excess, he fell into a ditch and died, on the way home to his own house.

Although there can be little doubt that Burns owed this officious functionary a grudge for the part which he took when the poet was brought before the kirk-session, and made to endure a public rebuke, on the occasion of the birth of his illegitimate child,—it is nevertheless certain, that his immediate design in composing this revoltingly profane satire, was to revenge the quarrel of his friend and patron Mr Gavin Hamilton. That this was his object, is avowed by Burns in his poetical Epistle to the Rev. John M'Math, enclosing a copy of the prayer.—The following account of the circumstances is from the able pen of Mr Chambers.

"The first person of respectable rank and good education who took any notice of Burns, was Mr Gavin Hamilton, writer in Mauchline, from whom he took his farm of Mossgiel on a sub-lease. Mr Hamilton lived in what is still called the Castle of Mauchline, namely, a half-fortified old mansion near the church, forming the only remains of the ancient priory. He was the son of a gentleman who had practised the same profession in the same place, and was in every respect a most estimable member of society—generous, affable, and humane. Unfortunately his religious practice did not square with the notions of the then minister of Mauchline, the 'Daddy Auld' of Burns's Poems, who, in 1785, is found in the session-records to have summoned him for rebuke, on the four following charges:—1. Unnecessary absence from church, for five consecutive Sundays (apparently the result of some dispute about a poor's rate); 2. Setting out on a journey to Carrick on a Sunday; 3. Habitual, if not total neglect of family

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get such exaltation,
I wha deserve sic just damnation,
For broken laws,
Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause.

worship; 4. Writing an abusive letter to the session in reference to some of their former proceedings respecting him. Strange though this prosecution may seem, it was strictly accordant with the right assumed by clergymen at that period to inquire into the private habits of parishioners; and as it is universally allowed that Mr Auld's designs in the matter were purely religious, it is impossible to speak of it disrespectfully. It was unfortunately, however, mixed up with some personal motives in the members of the session, which were so apparent to the Presbytery, to which Mr Hamilton appealed, that that reverend body ordered the proceedings to be stopped, and all notice of them expunged from the records. Prepossessions of more kinds than one induced Burns to let loose his irreverent muse in satire against the persecutors of Mr Hamilton; and the result was several poems, in which it is but too apparent that religion itself suffers in common with those whom he holds up as abusing it.—About two years after, when Burns had commenced the Edinburgh chapter of his life, a new offence was committed by Mr Hamilton. He had, on a Sunday morning, ordered a servant to take in some potatoes which happened to have been left out in the garden after being dug. This came to the ears of the minister, and Mr Hamilton was summoned to answer for the offence. Some ludicrous details occur in the session-records. It is there alleged that two and a half rows of potatoes were dug on the morning in question, by Mr Hamilton's express order, and carried home by his daughter: nay, so keen had the spirit of persecution been, that the rows had been formally measured, and found to be each eleven feet long; so that twenty-seven feet and a half altogether had been dug. The Presbytery or Synod treated this prosecution in the same way as the former, and Burns did not overlook it in his poems. He alludes to it in Holy Willie's Prayer, when he makes that individual implore a curse upon Mr Hamilton's

———basket and his store,
Kail and *potatoes*—

and on several other occasions."

We shall conclude our notice of this noted production, by subjoining the following judicious general reflections regarding it from the pen of Mr Lockhart. After quoting the very bold and

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plunged me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lake,
Whare damned devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to a stake.

unwarrantable terms, in which Mr Paul has ventured to eulogise this impious satire, he thus proceeds.—"The Reverend Hamilton Paul may be considered as expressing in the above, and in other passages of a similar tendency, the sentiments with which even the most audacious of Burns's anti-calvinistic satires were received among the Ayrshire divines of the New Light. That performances so blasphemous should have been, not only pardoned, but applauded by ministers of religion, is a singular circumstance, which may go far to make the reader comprehend the exaggerated state of party feeling in Burns's native county, at the period when he first appealed to the public ear: nor is it fair to pronounce sentence upon the young and reckless satirist, without taking into consideration the undeniable fact—that in his worst offences of this kind, he was encouraged and abetted by those, who, to say nothing more about their professional character and authority, were almost the only persons of liberal education whose society he had any opportunity of approaching at the period in question. Had Burns received, at this time, from his clerical friends and patrons, such advice as was tendered, when rather too late, by a layman who was as far from bigotry on religious subjects as any man in the world, this great genius might have made his first approaches to the public notice in a very different character.

"'Let your bright talents,'—thus wrote the excellent John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, in October 1787,—'Let those bright talents which the Almighty has bestowed on you, be henceforth employed to the noble purpose of supporting the cause of truth and virtue. An imagination so varied and forcible as yours, may do this in many different modes: nor is it necessary to be always serious, which you have been to good purpose; good morals may be recommended in a comedy, or even in a song. Great allowances are due to the heat and inexperience of youth;—and few poets can boast, like Thomson, of never having written a line, which, dying, they would wish to blot. In particular, I wish you to keep clear of the thorny walks of satire, which makes a man a hundred enemies for one friend, and is doubly dangerous when one is supposed to extend the slips and weakness of individuals to their sect or party. About modes of faith, serious and excellent men have always differed; and there are certain curious questions, which may afford scope to men of metaphysical heads, but

Yet I am here, a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, and example
To a' thy flock.

O Lord, thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singin' there, and dancin' here,
Wi' great an' sma';

seldom mend the heart or temper. Whilst these points are beyond human ken, it is sufficient that all our sects concur in their views of morals. You will forgive me for these hints.'

"Few such hints, it is likely, ever reached his ears in the days when they might have been most useful—days of which the principal honours and distinctions are thus alluded to by himself:—

'I've been at drunken writers' feasts;
Nay, been bitch-fou 'mang godly priests.'

"It is amusing to observe how soon even really Bucolic bards learn the tricks of their trade: Burns knew already what lustre a compliment gains from being set in sarcasm, when he made Willie call for special notice to

——'Gaun Hamilton's deserts; . . . . .
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes;
Yet has sae mony takin' arts
Wi' great and sma',
Frae God's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa,' &c.

"Nor is his other patron, Aiken, introduced with inferior skill, as having merited Willie's most fervent execration by his 'glib-tongued' defence of the heterodox doctor of Ayr:

'Lord! visit them wha did employ him,
And for thy people's sake destroy 'em.'

"Burns owed a compliment to this gentleman's elocutionary talents. 'I never knew there was any merit in my poems,' said he, 'until Mr Aiken *read them* into repute.'

"Encouraged by the 'roar of applause' which greeted these pieces, thus orally promulgated and recommended, he produced in succession various satires wherein the same set of persons were lashed; as The Ordination; The Kirk's Alarm, &c. &c.; and last, and best undoubtedly, The Holy Fair."—M.

For I am keepit by thy fear,
Free frae them a'.

But yet, O L—d! confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust,
And sometimes too, wi' warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd in sin.

O L—d! yestreen, thou kens, wi' Meg,
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
O! may't ne'er be a livin' plague
To my dishonour,
And I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.

Besides, I farther maun avow,
Wi' Leezie's lass, three times I trow;
But L—d, that Friday I was fou,
When I came near her,
Or else, thou kens, thy servant true
Wad ne'er hae steer'd her.

Maybe thou lets this fleshly thorn,
Beset thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
'Cause he's sae gifted;
If sae, thy han' maun e'en be borne,
Until thou lift it.

L—d, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race;
But G—d confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace,
And public shame.

L—d, mind Gavin Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae monie takin' arts,
Wi' grit and sma',
Frae G—d's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

And when we chasten'd him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
As set the warld in a roar
O' laughin' at us;
Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes.

L—d, hear my earnest cry and pray'r,
Against that presbyt'ry of Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, L—d make it bare,
Upo' their heads,
L—d, weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O L—d my G—d, that glib-tongued Aiken,*
My very heart and saul are quakin',
To think how I sat sweatin', shakin',
And p—d wi' dread,
While Auld wi' hingin' lip gaed snakin',
And hid his head.

L—d, in the day of vengeance try him,
L—d, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by 'em,
Nor hear their pray'r;

* Mr Robert Aiken, Writer in Ayr, and the person to whom The Cotter's Saturday Night is inscribed. He had advocated the cause of Dr M'Gill, and acted as counsel for Gavin Hamilton when his case was before the ecclesiastical court, and dreadfully lashed the Mauchline Session.—M.

But for thy people's sake destroy 'em,
And dinna spare.

But, L—d, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine,
Excell'd by nane,
And a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen.

EPITAPH ON HOLY WILLIE.

Here Holy Willie's sair worn clay
Takes up its last abode;
His saul has ta'en some other way,
I fear the left hand road.

Stop! there he is, as sure's a gun,
Poor silly body see him;
Nae wonder he's as black's the grun,
Observe wha's standing wi' him.

Your brunstane devilship I see,
Has got him there before ye;
But haud your nine-tail cat a wee,
Till ance ye've heard my story.

Your pity I will not implore,
For pity ye have nane!
Justice, alas! has gi'en him o'er,
And mercy's day is gane.

But hear me, Sir, Deil as ye are,
Look something to your credit;
A coof like him would stain your name,
If it were kent ye did it.

VERSES TO J. RANKINE.

(The person to whom his Poem on shooting the partridge is addressed, while Rankine occupied the farm of Adamhill, in Ayrshire.)

An day, as Death, that grusome carl,
Was driving to the tither warl'
A mixtie-maxtie motley squad,
And mony a guilt-bespotted lad;
Black gowns of each denomination,
And thieves of every rank and station,
From him that wears the star and garter,
To him that wintles in a halter:
Asham'd himsel to see the wretches,
He mutters, glow'rin at the bitches,
"By heavens, I'll not be seen behint them,
Nor 'mang the sp'ritual core present them,
Without, at least ae honest man
To grace this damn'd infernal clan."
By Adamhill a glance he threw,
"My stars!" quoth he, "I have it now,
There's just the man I want, i' faith,"
And quickly stoppit Rankine's breath.*

ON HEARING THAT THERE WAS FALSEHOOD IN THE REV. DR BLAIR'S VERY LOOKS.

That there is falsehood in his looks
I must and will deny:
They say their master is a knave—
And sure they do not lie.

* The first thought of this poem seems to have been suggested by *Falstaff's* account of his ragged recruits passing through Coventry:—

"I'll not pass through Coventry with them, that's flat!"
Cromek.

THE WHISTLE,

A BALLAD.

As the authentic prose history of the Whistle is curious, I shall here give it.—In the train of Anne of Denmark, when she came to Scotland with our James the Sixth, there came over also a Danish gentleman of gigantic stature and great prowess, and a matchless champion of Bacchus. He had a little ebony Whistle, which at the commencement of the orgies he laid on the table, and whoever was last able to blow it, every body else being disabled by the potency of the bottle, was to carry off the Whistle as a trophy of victory. The Dane produced credentials of his victories without a single defeat, at the courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, Moscow, Warsaw, and several of the petty courts in Germany; and challenged the Scots Bacchanalians to the alternative of trying his prowess, or else of acknowledging their inferiority.—After many overthrows on the part of the Scots, the Dane was encountered by Sir Robert Lawrie of Maxwelton, ancestor of the present worthy baronet of that name: who, after three days and three nights' hard contest, left the Scandinavian under the table,

And blew on the Whistle his Requiem shrill.

Sir Walter, son to Sir Robert before-mentioned, afterwards lost the Whistle to Walter Riddel of Glenriddel, who had married a sister of Sir Walter's.—On Friday, the 16th of October, 1790, at Friars-Carse, the Whistle was once more contended for, as related in the ballad, by the present Sir Robert Lawrie of Maxwelton; Robert Riddel, Esq. of Glenriddel, lineal descendant and representative of Walter Riddel, who won the Whistle, and in whose family it had continued; and Alexander Ferguson, Esq. of Craigdarroch, likewise descended of the great Sir Robert; which last gentleman carried off the hard-won honours of the field.

. . . . . .

I SING of a Whistle, a Whistle of worth,
I sing of a Whistle, the pride of the north,
Was brought to the court of our good Scottish king,
And long with this Whistle all Scotland shall ring.

Old Loda,* still rueing the arm of Fingal,
The god of the bottle sends down from his hall—

* See Ossian's Caric-thura.

"This Whistle's your challenge, to Scotland get o'er,
And drink them to hell, Sir! or ne'er see me more!"

Old poets have sung, and old chronicles tell
What champions ventur'd, what champions fell;
The son of great Loda was conqueror still,
And blew on the Whistle his requiem shrill.

Till Robert, the lord of the Cairn and the Scaur,
Unmatch'd at the bottle, unconquer'd in war,
He drank his poor god-ship as deep as the sea,
No tide of the Baltic e'er drunker than he.

Thus Robert, victorious, the trophy has gain'd;
Which now in his house has for ages remain'd;
Till three noble chieftains, and all of his blood,
The jovial contest again have renew'd.

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of flaw;
Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law;
And trusty Glenriddel, so skill'd in old coins;
And gallant Sir Robert, deep read in old wines.

Craigdarroch began, with a tongue smooth as oil,
Desiring Glenriddel to yield up the spoil;
Or else he would muster the heads of the clan,
And once more, in claret, try which was the man.

"By the gods of the ancients," Glenriddel replies,
"Before I surrender so glorious a prize,
I'll conjure the ghost of the great Rorie More,*
And bumper his horn with him twenty times o'er."

Sir Robert, a soldier, no speech would pretend,
But he ne'er turn'd his back on his foe—or his friend,

* See Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides.

Said, Toss down the Whistle, the prize of the field,
And knee-deep in claret, he'd die or he'd yield.

To the board of Glenriddel our heroes repair,
So noted for drowning of sorrow and care;
But for wine and for welcome not more known to fame,
Than the sense, wit, and taste, of a sweet lovely dame.

A bard was selected to witness the fray;
And tell future ages the feats of the day;
A bard who detested all sadness and spleen,
And wish'd that Parnassus a vineyard had been.

The dinner being over, the claret they ply,
And ev'ry new cork is a new spring of joy,
In the bands of old friendship and kindred so set,
And the bands grew the tighter the more they were wet.

Gay pleasure ran riot as bumpers ran o'er;
Bright Phœbus ne'er witness'd so joyous a core,
And vow'd that to leave them he was quite forlorn,
Till Cynthia hinted he'd see them next morn.

Six bottles a piece had well wore out the night,
When gallant Sir Robert, to finish the fight,
Turn'd o'er in one bumper a bottle of red,
And swore 'twas the way that their ancestors did.

Then worthy Glenriddel, so cautious and sage,
No longer the warfare, ungodly, would wage;
A high-ruling Elder to wallow in wine!
He left the foul business to folks less divine.

The gallant Sir Robert fought hard to the end;
But who can with fate and quart bumpers contend!
Though fate said—a hero should perish in light;
So uprose bright Phœbus—and down fell the knight.

Next uprose our bard, like a prophet in drink :—
" Craigdarroch, thou'lt soar when creation shall sink !
But if thou would flourish immortal in rhyme,
Come—one bottle more—and have at the sublime !

" Thy line, that have struggled for freedom with Bruce,
Shall heroes and patriots ever produce ;
So thine be the laurel, and mine be the bay ;
The field thou hast won, by yon bright god of day !"

THE KIRK'S ALARM:*

A SATIRE.

Orthodox, orthodox, wha believe in John Knox,
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience ;
There's a heretic blast has been blawn i' the wast,
That what is no sense must be nonsense.

Dr Mac,† Dr Mac, you should stretch on a rack,
To strike evil doers wi' terror ;
To join faith and sense upon ony pretence,
Is heretic, damnable error.

Town of Ayr, town of Ayr, it was mad I declare,
To meddle wi' mischief a-brewing ;
Provost John is still deaf to the church's relief,
And orator Bob ‡ is its ruin.

D'rymple mild,§ D'rymple mild, tho' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new driven snaw,
Yet that winna save ye, auld Satan must have ye,
For preaching that three's ane and twa.

* This poem was written a short time after the publication of Dr M'Gill's Essay, and has reference to the polemical warfare which it excited.

† Dr M'Gill. ‡ Robert Aiken. § Dr Dalrymple.

Rumble John,* Rumble John, mount the steps wi' a groan,
Cry the book is wi' heresy cramm'd;
Then lug out your ladle, deal brimstone like adle,
And roar every note of the damn'd.

Simper James,† Simper James, leave the fair Killie dames
There's a holier chace in your view;
I'll lay on your head, that the pack ye'll soon lead,
For puppies like you there's but few.

Singet Sawney,‡ Singet Sawney, are ye herding the penny,
Unconscious what evils await?
Wi' a jump, yell and howl, alarm every soul,
For the foul thief is just at your gate.

Daddy Auld,§ Daddy Auld, there's a tod in the fauld,
A tod meikle waur than the Clerk;‖
Tho' ye downa do skaith, ye'll be in at the death,
And gif ye canna bite, ye may bark.

Davie Bluster,¶ Davie Bluster, if for a saint ye do muster,
The corps is no nice of recruits;
Yet to worth let's be just, royal blood ye might boast,
If the ass was the king of the brutes.

Jamy Goose,** Jamy Goose, ye ha'e made but toom roose,
In hunting the wicked Lieutenant;
But the Doctor's your mark, for the Lord's haly ark,
He has cooper'd and cawd a wrang pin in't.

Poet Willie,†† Poet Willie, gi'e the Doctor a volley,
Wi' your liberty's chain and your wit;
O'er Pegasus's side ye ne'er laid a stride,
Ye but smelt, man, the place where he sh—t.

* Mr Russell. † Mr M'Kinlay. ‡ Mr Moody.
§ Mr Auld, Mauchline. ‖ Mr Gavin Hamilton.
¶ Mr Grant, Ochiltree. ** Mr Young, Cumnock.
†† Mr Peebles, Air.

Andro Gouk,* Andro Gouk, ye may slander the book,
And the book not the waur let me tell ye;
Ye are rich and look big, but lay by hat and wig,
And ye'll ha'e a calf's head o' sma' value.

Barr Steenie,† Barr Steenie, what mean ye? what mean ye?
If ye'll meddle nae mair wi' the matter,
Ye may ha'e some pretence to havins and sense,
Wi' people wha' ken ye nae better.

Irvine side,‡ Irvine side, wi' your turkey-cock pride,
Of manhood but sma' is your share;
Ye've the figure, 'tis true, even your faes will allow,
And your friends they dare grant you nae mair.

Muirland Jock,§ Muirland Jock, when the Lord makes a rock
To crush common sense for her sins,
If ill manners were wit, there's no mortal so fit
To confound the poor Doctor at ance.

Holy Will,‖ Holy Will, there was wit i' your skull,
When ye pilfer'd the alms o' the poor;
The timmer is scant, when ye're ta'en for a saint,
Wha should swing in a rape for an hour.

Calvin's sons, Calvin's sons, seize your sp'ritual guns,
Ammunition you never can need;
Your hearts are the stuff, will be powther enough,
And your skulls are storehouses o' lead.

Poet Burns, Poet Burns, wi' your priest-skelping turns,
Why desert ye your auld native shire;
Your Muse is a gipsie, e'en tho' she were tipsie,
She cou'd ca' us nae waur than we are.

* Dr A. Mitchell. † Mr Stephen Young, Barr.
‡ Mr Smith, Galston. § Mr Shepherd. ‖ An Elder in Mauchline.

THE HOLY TULZIE, OR TWA HERDS.*

O A' ye pious godly flocks,
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
Wha now will keep you frae the fox,
Or worrying tykes,
Or wha will tent the waifs and crocks,
About the dykes?

The twa best herds in a' the wast,
That e'er ga'e gospel horn a blast,
These five and twenty simmers past,
O! dool to tell,
Ha'e had a bitter black out-cast
Atween themsel.

O, Moody, man, and worthy Russell,
How could you raise so vile a bustle?
Ye'll see how new-light herds will whistle,
And think it fine!
The Lord's cause ne'er gat sic a twistle,
Sin' I ha'e min'.

O, Sirs! wha e'er wad ha'e expeckit,
Your duty ye wad sae negleckit,
Ye wha were ne'er by laird respeckit,
To wear the plaid,

* "The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light," says Burns in reference to this piece, "was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my *Holy Fair*. I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but to prevent the worst I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause." The two herds or pastors were Mr Moody, minister of Riccartoun, and that favourite victim of Burns's, John Russell, then minister at Kilmarnock, and afterwards of Stirling.—M.

But by the brutes themselves eleckit,
To be their guide.

What flock wi' Moody's flock could rank,
Sae hale and hearty every shank,
Nae poison'd soor Arminian stank
He let them taste,
Frae Calvin's well, aye clear they drank,
O sic a feast!

The thummart, wil'-cat, brock, and tod,
Weel kend his voice thro' a' the wood,
He smelt their ilka hole and road,
Baith out and in,
And weel he lik'd to shed their bluid,
And sell their skin.

What herd like Russell tell'd his tale,
His voice was heard thro' muir and dale,
He kend the Lord's sheep, ilka tail,
O'er a' the height,
And saw gin they were sick or hale,
At the first sight.

He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,
Or nobly fling the gospel club,
And new-light herds could nicely drub,
Or pay their skin,
Could shake them o'er the burning dub;
Or heave them in.

Sic twa—O! do I live to see't,
Sic famous twa sae disagreet,
And names, like villain, hypocrite,
Ilk ither gi'en,
While new-light herds wi' laughin' spite,
Say neither's liein'!

A' ye wha tent the gospel fauld,
There's Duncan, deep, and Peebles, shaul,
But chiefly thou, apostle Auld,
We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them, hot and cauld,
Till they agree.

Consider, Sirs, how we're beset,
There's scarce a new herd that we get,
But comes frae 'mang that cursed set,
I winna name,
I hope frae heav'n to see them yet
In fiery flame.

Dalrymple has been lang our fae,
M'Gill has wrought us meikle wae,
And that curs'd rascal ca'd M'Quhae,
And baith the Shaws,
That aft ha'e made us black and blae,
Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld Woodrow lang has hatch'd mischief,
We thought aye death would bring relief,
But he has gotten, to our grief,
Ane to succeed him,
A chield wha'll soundly buff our beef;
I meikle dread him.*

And mony a ane that I could tell,
Wha fain would openly rebel,
Forby turn-coats amang oursel,
There's Smith for ane,
I doubt he's but a grey-nick quill,
And that ye'll fin'.

* Alluding to the Rev. Mr M'Math, to whom the poet addressed one of his epistles.

O! a' ye flocks o'er a' the hills,
By mosses, meadows, moors, and fells,
Come join your counsel and your skills,
To cow the lairds,
And get the brutes the power themsels,
To choose their herds.

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
And learning in a woody dance,
And that fell cur ca'd Common Sense,
That bites sae sair,
Be banish'd o'er the sea to France:
Let him bark there.

Then Shaw's and Dalrymple's eloquence,
M'Gill's close nervous excellence,
M'Quhae's pathetic manly sense,
And guid M'Math,
Wi' Smith, wha thro' the heart can glance,
May a' pack aff.

THE INVENTORY.

IN ANSWER TO A MANDATE BY THE SURVEYOR OF THE TAXES.

Sir, as your mandate did request,
I send you here a faithfu' list,
O' gudes and gear, and a' my graith,
To which I'm clear to gie my aith.

Imprimis then, for carriage cattle,
I have four brutes o' gallant mettle,
As ever drew afore a pettle,
My Lan'* afore's a gude auld has been,
And wight and wilfu' a' his days been.

* The fore horse on the left-hand in the plough.

My Lan'* ahin's a weel gaun fillie,
That aft has borne me hame frae Killie,†
And your auld burrough mony a time,
In days when riding was nae crime—
But ance when in my wooing pride,
I like a blockhead boost to ride,
The wilfu' creature sae I pat to,
(Lord pardon a' my sins and that to!)
I play'd my fillie sic a shavie,
She's a' bedevil'd wi' the spavie.
My Furr‡ ahin's a wordy beast,
As e'er in tug or tow was trac'd.—
The fourth's a Highland Donald hastie,
A damn'd red wud Kilburnie blastie;
Foreby a Cowt, o' Cowts the wale,
As ever ran afore a tail.
If he be spar'd to be a beast,
He'll draw me fifteen pun' at least.—
Wheel carriages I ha'e but few,
Three carts, and twa are feckly new;
Ae auld wheelbarrow, mair for token,
Ae leg, and baith the trams are broken;
I made a peker o' the spin'le,
And my auld mother brunt the trin'le.—
For men, I've three mischievous boys,
Run deils for rantin' and for noise;
A gaudsman ane, a thrasher t'other,
Wee Davock hauds the nowt in fother:
I rule them as I ought, discreetly,
And aften labour them completely,
And aye on Sundays duly nightly,
I on the questions targe them tightly;

* The hindmost horse on the left-hand in the plough.

† Kilmarnock.

‡ The hindmost horse on the right-hand in the plough.

Till faith, wee Davock's turn'd sae gleg,
Tho' scarcely langer than your leg,
He'll screed you aff Effectual Calling,
As fast as ony in the dwalling.—
Iv'e nane in female servan' station,
(Lord, keep me aye frae a' temptation!)
I ha'e nae wife; and that my bliss is,
And ye have laid nae tax on misses;
And then if kirk folks dinna clutch me,
I ken the devils daurna touch me.
Wi' weans I'm mair than weel contented,
Heav'n sent me ane mae than I wanted.
My sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess.
She stares the daddy in her face,
Enough of ought ye like but grace;
But her, my bonnie sweet wee lady,
I've paid enough for her already,
And gin ye tax her or her mither,
I'll swear ye'se get them a' thegither.

And now, remember Mr Aiken,
Nae kind of licence out I'm takin';
Frae this time forth I do declare,
I'se ne'er ride horse nor hizzie mair;
Through dirt and dub for life I'll paidle,
Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle;
My travel a' on foot I'll shank it,
I've sturdy bearers, Gude be thankit.—
The kirk and you may tak you that,
It puts but little in your pat;
Sae dinna put me in your buke,
Nor for my ten white shillings luke.

This list wi' my ain han' I wrote it,
Day and date as under notit,
Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic, ROBERT BURNS.

Mossgiel, February 22d, 1786.

ELEGY ON THE YEAR 1788.

For lords or kings I dinna mourn,
E'en let them die—for that they're born!
But, oh, prodigious to reflect,
A Towmont, Sirs, is gane to wreck!
O Eighty-eight, in thy sma' space,
What dire events ha'e taken place!
Of what enjoyments thou hast reft us!
In what a pickle thou hast left us!

The Spanish empire's tint ahead,
And my auld teethless Bawtie's dead;
The toolzie's teugh 'tween Pitt and Fox,
And our guidwife's wee birdy cocks;
The tane is game, a bluidy devil,
But to the hen-birds unco civil;
The tither's dour, has nae sic breedin',
But better stuff ne'er claw'd a midden!

Ye ministers come mount the poupit,
And cry till ye be hearse and roopit;
For Eighty-eight he wish'd you weel,
And gied you a' baith gear and meal;
E'en mony a plack, and mony a peck,
Ye ken yoursels, for little feck!

Ye bonnie lassies, dight your een,
For some o' you ha'e tint a frien';
In Eighty-eight, ye ken, was ta'en,
What ye'll ne'er ha'e to gie again.

Observe the very nowt and sheep
How dowff and dowie now they creep;
Nay, even the yirth itsel' does cry,
For Embro' wells are grutten dry.

O Eighty-nine, thou's but a bairn,
And no owre auld, I hope, to learn!
Thou beardless boy, I pray tak care,
Thou now has got thy daddy's chair,
Nae hand-cuff'd, mizzl'd, half-shackl'd Regent,
But, like himsel', a full free agent
Be sure ye follow out the plan
Nae waur than he did, honest man!
As meikle better as you can.

January 1, 1789.

SONNET,

ON THE DEATH OF MR RIDDEL.

No more, ye warblers of the wood, no more,
Nor pour your descant grating on my ear:
Thou young-eyed Spring thy charms I cannot bear;
More welcome were to me grim Winter's wildest roar.

How can you please, ye flowers, with all your dies?
Ye blow upon the sod that wraps my friend:
How can I to the tuneful strain attend?
That strain pours round th' untimely tomb where Riddel lies.*

Yes, pour, ye warblers, pour the notes of woe,
And soothe the Virtues weeping on this bier;
The man of Worth, and has not left his peer,
Is in his 'narrow house' for ever darkly low.

Thee, Spring, again with joy shall others greet;
Me, mem'ry of my loss will only meet.

* Robert Riddel, Esq. of Friar's Carse, a very worthy character, and one to whom our bard thought himself under many obligations.

THE JOLLY BEGGARS;

A CANTATA.*

RECITATIVO.

When lyart leaves bestrew the yird,
Or wavering like the Bauckie-bird,†
Bedim cauld Boreas' blast;
When hailstanes drive wi' bitter skyte,
And infant frosts begin to bite,
In hoary cranreuch drest;
Ae night at e'en a merry core
O' randie, gangrel bodies,
In Poosie-Nansie's held the splore,‡
To drink their orra duddies:

* This Cantata was written in the year 1785. We have seen the original MS. in the poet's autograph in the possession of the late Mr Thomas Stewart, Bookseller in Greenock. A fac simile of it was published some years ago by Mr Stewart. That gentleman died in November 1824, and the MS. is now, we believe, the property of Mr Lumsden of Glasgow.—M.

† The old Scotch name for the Bat.

‡ Poosie Nansie's, "The scene of the 'Jolly Beggars,' was an hostel in Mauchline of the lowest possible description, to which beggars and vagrants resorted for lodging and food. It was adapted for the entertainment of such characters only, and no other sort of persons ever entered it, excepting, perhaps, such wags as Burns himself, when bent upon amusement, and desirous of seeing the lowest scenes which human nature can exhibit.

"As the approach of night calls home all the creatures of animated nature to rest and enjoyment, so, in these good old times, did Saturday night, the sunset of the week, bring to roost all the stray sons of poverty, bent upon compensating, by the festivity of one night, the contumelies, the wanderings, the hunger, cold, pain, and abstinence, of the rest. On that evening, therefore, whole fleets of mendicants might be seen thronging the roads, bound for Poosie Nansie's, to 'haud the splore,' and pouring in at all the 'town-ends' in Mauchline. Her oval-shaped door received them within its *crater*, as the bung-hole in the genie's cask, in the *Arabian Night's Entertainments*, received the vapour into which the fisherman had caused him to dissolve himself.

Wi' quaffing and laughing,
They ranted and they sang;
Wi' jumping and thumping,
The vera girdle rang.

Then would there be recognitions of acquaintance, and the most ceremonious shaking of hands imaginable; for they were always ceremonious, till such time as the ice of politeness was thawed by the genial warmth of a few preliminary drams; when, of course, there was a greater community of friendly feeling throughout. But not more wonders in the dissolution of ceremony did Poosie's Kilbagie achieve, than did her large pulpit-looking fire round which they gathered, in respect of relaxing with equally potent heat the cripple limbs of the company. It was truly amazing to witness the miracles wrought by Poosie's wonderful fire. The miserable wretch who perished with the rheumatism, and walked double through the week, was cured in an instant, as if the demon of the disease had fled from his bones on coming within the influence of a spell. The 'Po-or ou-ld bli-nd man,' who had howled forth the terrible circumstances of his condition, vexing the ears of the lieges, for six long days, suddenly opened his eyes to the blessings before him, as if he had only awoke from a long sleep. The 'poor sailor lad,' too, who had lost an arm with Rodney, on the glorious 12th of August, 1782, seemed suddenly to forget all the effects of the engagement, and, in the twinkling of a handspike, the long deceased limb sprang from the jacket, into all its pristine health and vigour. More astonishing resurrections than even that took place. Limbs accustomed to 'limp wi' the spavie,' recovered their vigour and proportion. Legs grew down from trunks formerly detruncated, and arms sprang from shoulders erst apparently stumps. Immense blotches that, in week days, excited the commiseration of the charitable, in the character of plague spots upon the skin, at once disappeared, 'and; like the baseless fabric of a vision, left not a wreck behind.' The man 'with a brown leg and blue one,' who had 'had the black scurvy in Jamaica, and come home a poor helpless object,' became in a moment the soundest and liveliest man in the company; and the wretch who trembled through the week between two crutches, as if every part of his body were taking leave of the other, now shivering with the ague, and at other times agonized by the cramp, threw by his wooden friends and was 'himself again.' In short, the transformations and cures accomplished at Poosie Nansie's fireside, were miraculous and manifold. Suffice it to say, that the blind saw, the deaf heard, the dumb spoke, (nay, 'ranted and sang,') the lame walked—and *all drank*. In the latter department, there was not a single inefficient member.

"No sooner were the window shutters of night all fairly closed

First, neist the fire, in auld red rags,
Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,
And knapsack a' in order;

in, and every thing snug, than the festivities of the evening commenced. Tea was paraded by the females of the company, and drunk from *luggies*, *caups* and *tinnies*, all of them vessels not easily broken. Fowls and pieces of meat were sometimes produced from secret wallets, and bacon ham was no unusual dish; all of which were hastily prepared by frying,—for they had no delicacy of taste in cooking. To these were added savoury messes, consisting of cold meat, eggs, hares, and other articles of food the most incongruous in association, seasoned highly with salt, pepper, onions, and occasionally garlic. As soon as the feast was pretty well over—for it never could be said to be altogether done—the fiercer debaucheries began, and the hostess was in perpetual demand for supplies of more liquor. Nansie did not retail spirits herself, but procured what was wanted from a neighbouring shop, where she was allowed a small emolument for her custom, which she contrived to increase not a little by cheating her guests of an enormous commission (in kind) for her trouble. Kilbagie was then sold so low as one penny per gill; of course it was quite possible to get completely intoxicated for four pence. Over this stuff they were wont to carouse till midnight, when the 'mirth and fun' generally grew so 'fast and furious,' that nothing could contain them, and their joy could only find vent in the confusion of a dance, or a squabble. If the former amicable method chanced to be adopted, the floor was cleared in an instant for action. The whole of Nansie's furniture was promiscuously huddled into a corner, and to it they set, men, women, and children, like a parcel of infuriated Bacchanalians, tossing their limbs wildly about, and using gesticulations, and *setting* into attitudes, that no language can paint. After tiring of this exercise, they would again sit down to deep debauch, and drink till morning light, about which time all that had survived the soporific effects of the liquor, were commonly engaged in a Polymachia, or battle general; which exertion was for the most part quite as effectual in laying the company low, as the Kilbagie. They seemed to fight themselves out, in short; and one by one dropped from the scene, till not a combatant was left. All were on the floor, dead, flat, and peaceable. Sunday morning, which, rising in Scotland, finds all nature reduced to a state of perfect calm, usually found the inmates of Poosie Nansie's hotel in the same circumstances. All was quiet; but it was the quiet of desolation. The whole apartment seemed strewn with the ruins of the human race,—'reliquiæ Danaum,'—a heterogeneous chaos of carcasses, heads, arms, women, children, wooden legs, and other fragments of humanity,

His doxy lay within his arm,
Wi' usquebae and blankets warm,
  She blinket on her sodger :
And aye he gies the touzie drab
  The tither skelpin kiss,
While she held up her greedy gab
  Just like an awmos dish ; *

together with the no less disabled pieces of Nansie's furniture, that were in every respect analogous to the strange beings who used them on the preceding evening.

"Through the course of Sunday, it was observed that the inmates of Nansie's mansion were wonderfully quiet and orderly. If the weather was good, many put off the day by sitting upon turf seats at the door, smoking and talking; while the children lay half naked upon the green, amusing themselves with every species of feat and play, like Nereids sporting on the azure wave. In proportion as the debauch or battle of the preceding evening had been fierce and fatal, the conversations of Sunday were harmonious, and the harmony universal. Whatever were the injuries received in the fray, none of them were remembered. It seemed to be then the general wish that an amnesty should be agreed upon, and no revenge taken for former aggressions. At the close of night, however, the splore was again commenced with considerable briskness. But the festivities of this evening never reached within many degrees of their Saturday-night jollifications, in intenseness of enjoyment, or obstreperousness of mirth, partly for the sake of decorum, partly on account of low finances, and principally because their spirits, which, suppressed through the week, burst out into the most violent expressions upon Saturday-night, were so far exhausted by the first overflow, that little material remained to be expended upon the second. On Monday morning, it was a rich sight to see the crapulous wretches take their departure from Mauchline, with empty wallets, sore heads, and sneaking aspects,—so completely spent in every respect by the excesses they had committed, that their wretched appearance looked a thousand times more wretched; and what had formerly seemed only ruins of humanity was now the wreck of ruins."—*Chambers.*

* "Burns here likens a lady's mouth, rather irreverently, to an 'awmos dish;' and, perhaps, few readers of the poems of that immortal bard are aware of what he means by the expression. The 'awmos dish,' or 'beggar's dish,' as it was more frequently called, was a wooden vessel, half platter, half bowl, with which every mendicant was formerly provided, as a regular and proper part of his professional accoutrements. The awmos dish was a

Ilk smack still, did crack still,
Just like a cadger's whip,
Then staggering and swaggering
He roar'd this ditty up—

piece of furniture attached to the profession from a very early period. In the time of our Queen Mary, when the Protestants of the Netherlands first began to resist the tyranny of Philip II., the Count De Berlaimont contemptuously told the Princess of Parma, that she had nothing to fear from such a race of beggars —using the French word *gueux*. The Protestants seized upon, and rejoiced in the title—*Les Gueux!* At a great dinner, held for the purpose of expressing their sentiments, the Marquis of Utrecht, who acted as a president, descended from the chair, and, reappearing with a beggar's wallet upon his back, and a beggar's *wooden cup* in his hand, drank the general health in that vessel, which was immediately passed round the company, all of whom did the same. When these patriots, afterwards, by a strange enthusiasm, assumed the garb of beggars, the wooden dish was part of the *properties*—to use the theatrical phrase— with which they supported the character. The vessel, which thus flourished in the sixteenth century, was generally used by the Scottish mendicants and tinkers till near the close of the eighteenth, when the old honest system of mendicancy itself came to a close. Perhaps, if it were for nothing but its connection with one of the most heart-stirring tales of modern liberty, this object would deserve commemoration. Some attention, also, is due to it on account of its being made the subject of simile by Burns. I shall, therefore, make no apology for presenting the following curious account of it, from the pen of a Peebles-shire shepherd, who is old enough to remember its general use. I print the article in the exact phraseology used by my correspondent:—

"'The beggar's dish was used by two sets of persons,—the itinerant and professed beggars, and the wandering tribes of gypsies. There was no difference in the shape and size of either; but the latter class had theirs often clasped with strong hooks here and there, or perhaps bound round the middle with a neat yellow hoop. As far as I can recollect, it varied in size from a pint and a-half to two Scots pints of measure; but in my father's house at Ettrick hall, I remember one that would have holden, I think, between three and four pints, and it generally went by the appellation of 'the beggar's dish.' I never saw any other plates of their shape or form; they increased gradually in width from the bottom to the middle, and for about two inches more contracted hastily towards the brim, the edge of which was turned very thin, so thin that they often had rents in several places of

AIR.

Tune—"Soldier's Joy."

I am a son of Mars who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come;
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

their upper edge, and these cracks the tinkers held together with clear or yellow tin, or wire hooks, as noticed above. The beggar's dish was used for two purposes, to receive their *aumus*, and to carry broth, milk, porridge, &c. out to the road side, where the men and beggars' children staid till the return of the wives from the farm-house, with what beverage they could collect either by entreaty or pilfrey; and for carrying victuals the beggar's dish was well adapted, for, by its contracting so near the brim, it prevented from spilling what the good housewife had poured into it, and also kept the food warm and comfortable till it reached the principal horde: this case, however, was only applicable to the tinkers. The professional beggar presented himself and his wants all at once. I think I see him, as I have often done, leaning over a long pike staff, as it was called, and saying, 'Gudewife, I mann hae my aumus;' 'What d'ye take,' was then asked. In a hoarse, slow tone, it was then answered, 'Meal, or ony thing ye like.' The meal *rusky* was then sought, when the beggar from below his left arm drew out his beggar dish—held it out, and into it the gudewife put some handfuls of meal; but the quantity was adjusted as the beggar stood high or low in the gudewife's esteem—as he was of good or bad report—as he was known or was a stranger in the place—or as he was known to have much or little need. He then poured it into a small sack, or meal pock, as it was called, which was slung over his right shoulder, and hung on his left side, below his left arm, and in above it thrust his dish, unless the gudewife gave him also *kale* or milk; this was also poured into his dish; then if there were many servants, &c. in the house at the time, the beggar generally went to the door, or went out where he could get a seat till he had eaten up his aumus; when this was done, and his pocks all equally balanced about him, he returned to the kitchen, thanked the gudewife for her kindness, wished all the family well, with peace and plenty among them; then leaning on a long white sturdy kent, well shod with iron, on the foot, and which grated among the stones aye as he set it down, slowly retired from the hospitable door.'"—*Chambers.*

My prenticeship I past where my leader breath'd his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram ;*
I served out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
And the Moro † low was laid at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

I lastly was with Curtis, ‡ among the floating batt'ries,
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot to head me,
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of a drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

And now tho' I must beg with a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle and my callet,
As when I us'd in scarlet to follow a drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

What tho' with hoary locks, I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks oftentimes for a home,
When the tother bag I sell, and the tother bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell, at the sound of the drum,
Lal de daudle, &c.

RECITATIVO.

He ended : and the kebars sheuk,
Aboon the chorus roar;

* "The heights of Abram,"—the battle field in front of Quebec, where general Wolfe fell in the arms of victory, 1759.—M.

† "The Moro low was laid," &c.—the capture of Havannah, the capital of the island of Cuba, by the British, in 1762, is the event here alluded to. The Moro, a strong castle defending the place, having been gallantly taken by storm, the city and island surrendered; 14 sail of the line and four frigates were taken or destroyed; and an immense booty, amounting in value to £3,000,000, fell into the hands of the captors.—M.

‡ "I lastly was with Curtis, among the floating batteries."—The destruction of the Spanish floating batteries, during the famous siege of Gibraltar, 1782—on which occasion the gallant Captain Curtis rendered the most signal service—is the heroic exploit here referred to.—M.

While frighted rattons backward leuk,
And seek the benmost bore ;
A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
He skirl'd out encore !
But up arose the martial chuck,
And laid the loud uproar.

AIR.

Tune—"Soldier laddie."

I once was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men ;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade ;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch,
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church ;
He ventur'd the soul, and I risked the body,
Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got ;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.
Sing Lal de lal, &c.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at a Cunningham fair ;

His rags regimental they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoic'd at my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

And now I have liv'd—I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup or a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Poor Merry Andrew in the neuk,
Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler hizzie;
They mind't na wha the chorus took,
Between themselves they were sae busy.
At length wi' drink and courting dizzy,
He stoiter'd up and made a face;
Then turn'd and laid a smack on Grizzy,
Syne tun'd his pipes wi' grave grimace.

AIR.

Tune—"Auld Sir Symon."

Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou,
Sir Knave is a fool in a session;
He's there but a prentice I trow,
But I am a fool by profession.

My Grannie she bought me a beuk,
And I held awa to the school;
I fear I my talent misteuk,
But what will ye ha'e of a fool.

For drink I would venture my neck,
A hizzie's the half of my craft;
But what could ye other expect
Of ane that's avowedly daft.

I ance was ty'd up like a stirk,
For civilly swearing and quaffing;
I ance was abus'd i' the kirk,
For towzing a lass i' my daffin.

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
Let naebody name wi' a jeer;
There's ev'n, I'm tauld, i' the court,
A Tumbler ca'd the Premier.

Observ'd ye yon reverend lad
Mak faces to tickle the mob;
He rails at our mountebank squad,
It's rivalship just i' the job.

And now my conclusion I'll tell,
For faith I'm confoundedly dry,
The chiel that's a fool for himsel,
Depend on't, he's dafter than I.

RECITATIVO.

Then neist outspak a raucle carlin,
Wha kent fu' weel to cleek the sterling,
For mony a pursie she had hooked,
And had in mony a well been ducked.
Her dove had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fa' the waefu' woodie!
Wi' sighs and sobs she thus began
To wail her braw John Highlandman.

AIR.

Tune—"O an ye were dead gudeman."

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lalland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

CHORUS.

Sing, hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing, ho my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman!

With his philibeg and tartan plaid,
And gude claymore down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

We ranged a' from Tweed to Spey,
And liv'd like lords and ladies gay:
For a Lalland face he feared none,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

They banish'd him beyond the sea,
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

But, oh! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;
My curse upon them every one,
They've hang'd my braw John Highlandman
Sing, hey, &c.

And now a widow, I must mourn
The pleasures that will ne'er return:
No comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman,
Sing, hey, &c.

RECITATIVO.

A pigmy scraper, wi' his fiddle,
Wha us'd at trysts and fairs to driddle,
Her strappin limb and gausy middle
(He reach'd nae higher,)
Had hol'd his heartie like a riddle,
And blawn't on fire.

Wi' hand on haunch, and upward e'e,
He croon'd his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an Arioso key,
The wee Apollo
Set off wi' Allegretto glee
His giga solo.

AIR.

Tune.—"Whistle owre the lave o't."

Let me ryke up to dight that tear,
And go wi' me to be my dear,
And then your every care and fear
May whistle owre the lave o't.

CHORUS.

I am a fiddler to my trade,
And a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle owre the lave o't.

At kirns and weddings we'se be there,
And O! sae nicely's we will fare;
We'll bouse about till Daddie Care
Sing, whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

Sae merrily's the banes we'll pyke,
And sun oursels about the dyke,

And at our leisure, when we like,
We'll whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

But bless me wi' your heaven o' charms,
And while I kittle hair on thairms,
Hunger, cauld, and a' sic harms,
May whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Her charms had struck a sturdy Caird,
As weel as poor Gutscraper;
He taks the fiddler by the beard,
And draws a rusty rapier.—
He swoor by a' was swearing worth,
To speet him like a pliver,
Unless he would from that time forth,
Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly e'e, poor Tweedledee
Upon his hunkers bended,
And pray'd for grace, wi ruefu' face,
And sae the quarrel ended.
But though his little heart did grieve,
When round the tinkler prest her,
He feign'd to snirtle in his sleeve,
When thus the Caird address'd her:—

AIR.

Tune—"Clout the Caudron."

My bonnie lass, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my station;
I've travell'd round all Christian ground,
In this my occupation.

I've ta'en the gold, I've been enroll'd
In many a noble squadron:
But vain they search'd, when off I march'd,
To go and clout the caudron.
I've ta'en the gold, &c.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
Wi' a' his noise and cap'rin',
And tak a share wi' those that bear
The budget and the apron.
And by that stowp, my faith and houpe,
And by that dear Kilbaigie,*
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
May I ne'er weet my craigie.
And by that stowp, &c.

RECITATIVO.

The Caird prevail'd—the unblushing fair
In his embraces sunk,
Partly wi' love, o'ercome sae sair,
And partly she was drunk.
Sir Violino, with an air,
That show'd a man of spunk,
Wish'd unison between the pair,
And made the bottle clunk,
To their health that night.

But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft,
That play'd a dame a shavie,
The fiddler rak'd her fore and aft,
Behint the chicken cavie.
Her lord, a wight o' Homer's craft,†
Tho' limping with the spavie,

* A peculiar sort of whisky, so called from Kilbaigie distillery in Clackmannanshire, and a great favourite with Poosie-Nansie's clubs.

† Homer is allowed to be the oldest ballad-singer on record.

He hirpled up, and lap like daft,
And shor'd them Daintie Davie,
O' boot that night.

He was a care-defying blade,
As ever Bacchus listed,
Though Fortune sair upon him laid,
His heart she ever miss'd it.
He had no wish but—to be glad,
Nor want but—when he thirsted;
He hated nought but—to be sad,
And thus the Muse suggested
His sang that night.

AIR.

Tune—"For a' that, and a' that."

I am a bard of no regard,
Wi' gentle folks, and a' that;
But Homer-like, the glowran byke,
Frae town to town I draw that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as meikle's a' that;
I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
I've wife enough for a' that.

I never drank the Muse's stank,
Castalia's burn, and a' that;
But there it streams, and richly reams,
My Helicon I ca' that.
For a' that, &c.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, and a' that;

But lordly will, I hold it still
A moral sin to thraw that.
For a' that, &c.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love and a' that;
But for how lang the flie may stang,
Let inclination law that.
For a' that, &c.

Their tricks and craft have put me daft,
They've ta'en me in, and a' that:
But clear your decks, and here's the sex!
I like the jads for a' that.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as meikle's a' that;
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
They're welcome till't for a' that.

RECITATIVO.

So sung the bard—and Nansie's wa's
Shook with a thunder of applause,
Re-echo'd from each mouth;
They toom'd their pocks, and pawn'd their duds,
They scarcely left to co'er their fuds,
To quench their lowan drouth.

Then owre again, the jovial thrang,
The poet did request,
To lowse his pack, and wale a sang,
A ballad o' the best:
He rising, rejoicing,
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, and found them
Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.

Tune—"Jolly mortals fill your glasses."

See! the smoking bowl before us,
Mark our jovial ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing.

CHORUS.

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

What is title? what is treasure?
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'Tis no matter how or where!
A fig, &c.

With the ready trick and fable,
Round we wander all the day;
And at night in barn or stable,
Hug our doxies on the hay.
A fig, &c.

Does the train-attended carriage
Through the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love?
A fig, &c.

Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes;
Let them cant about decorum
Who have characters to lose.
A fig, &c.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here's to all the wandering train!
Here's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all cry out, Amen!

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.*

* Regarding this highly dramatic and picturesque poem, nothing better can be said than what is given by Sir Walter Scott, in an essay on the genius of Burns, from which the following is an extract. "The Jolly Beggars, for humorous description and nice discrimination of character, is inferior to no poem of the same length in the whole range of English poetry. The scene, indeed, is laid in the very lowest department of low life, the actors being a set of strolling vagrants, met to carouse, and barter their rags and plunder for liquor in a hedge ale-house. Yet even in describing the movements of such a group, the native taste of the poet has never suffered his pen to slide into any thing coarse or disgusting. The extravagant glee and outrageous frolic of the beggars are ridiculously contrasted with their maimed limbs, rags, and crutches—the sordid and squalid circumstances of their appearance are judiciously thrown into the shade. Nor is the art of the poet less conspicuous in the individual figures, than in the general mass. The festive vagrants are distinguished from each other by personal appearance and character, as much as any fortuitous assembly in the higher orders of life. The group, it must be observed, is of Scottish character, and doubtless our northern brethren are more familiar with its varieties than we are: yet the distinctions are too well marked to escape even the South'ron. The most prominent persons are a maimed soldier and his female companion, a hackneyed follower of the camp, a stroller, late the consort of a Highland ketteran or sturdy beggar,—'but weary fa' the waefu' woodie!'—Being now at liberty, she becomes an object of rivalry between a 'pigmy scraper with his fiddle' and a strolling tinker. The latter, a desperate bandit, like most of his profession, terrifies the musician out of the field, and is preferred by the damsel of course. A wandering ballad-singer, with a brace of doxies, is last introduced upon the stage. Each of these mendicants sings a song in character, and such a collection of humorous lyrics, connected by vivid poetical description, is not, perhaps, to be paralleled in the English language.—As the collection and the poems are very

WILLIE CHALMERS.

Wi' braw new branks in meikle pride,
And eke a braw new brechan,
My Pegasus I'm got astride,
And up Parnassus pechin;
Whiles owre a bush, wi' downward crush,
The doited beastie stammers;
Then up he gets, and off he sets,
For sake o' Willie Chalmers.

I doubtna, lass, that weel kenn'd name,
May cost a pair o' blushes;
I am nae stranger to your fame,
Nor his warm urged wishes.
Your bonnie face, sae mild and sweet,
His honest heart enamours,
And faith ye'll no be lost a whit,
Though wair'd on Willie Chalmers.

little known in England, we transcribe the concluding ditty, chaunted by the ballad-singer at the request of the company, whose 'mirth and fun have now grown fast and furious,' and set them above all sublunary terrors of jails, stocks, and whipping-posts. It is certainly far superior to any thing in the Beggars' Opera, where alone we could expect to find its parallel.

"We are at a loss to conceive any good reason why Dr Currie did not introduce this singular and humorous cantata into his collection. It is true, that in one or two passages the muse has trespassed slightly upon decorum, where, in the language of Scottish song,

'High kilted was she,
As she gaed o'er the lea.'

Something, however, is to be allowed to the nature of the subject, and something to the education of the poet: and if from veneration to the names of Swift and Dryden, we tolerate the grossness of the one, and the indelicacy of the other, the respect due to that of Burns, may surely claim indulgence for a few light strokes of broad humour."—M.

Auld Truth hersel' might swear ye're fair,
And Honour safely back her,
And Modesty assume your air,
And ne'er a ane mistak' her:
And sic twa love-inspiring een
Might fire ev'n holy Palmers;
Nae wonder then they've fatal been
To honest Willie Chalmers.

I doubtna fortune may you shore
Some mim-mou'd pouther'd priestie,
Fu' lifted up wi' Hebrew lore,
And band upon his breastie:
But Oh! what signifies to you,
His lexicons and grammars;
The feeling heart's the royal blue,
And that's wi' Willie Chalmers.

Some gapin', glowrin', country laird,
May warsle for your favour;
May claw his lug, and straik his beard,
And host up some palaver.
My bonny maid, before ye wed
Sic clumsy-witted hammers,
Seek Heaven for help, and barefit skelp
Awa' wi' Willie Chalmers.

Forgive the Bard! my fond regard
For ane that shares my bosom,
Inspires my muse to gie 'm his dues,
For deil a hair I roose him.
May powers aboon unite you soon,
And fructify your amours,—
And every year come in mair dear,
To you and Willie Chalmers.*

* This was written by Burns for a friend of his, a lawyer in Ayr.

EPISTLE TO J. RANKINE.

INCLOSING SOME POEMS.

O rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wale o' cocks for fun and drinkin!
There's mony godly folks are thinkin,
Your dreams* and tricks
Will send you, Korah-like, a-sinkin,
Straught to auld Nick's.

Ye hae sae monie cracks and cants,
And in your wicked, drucken rants,
Ye mak a devil o' the saunts,
And fill them fou;
And then their failings, flaws and wants,
Are a' seen thro'.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That holy robe, O dinna tear it!

* A certain humorous dream of his was then making a noise in the country side; the circumstances were as follows. Rankine's ready wit made him a very welcome guest at the table of a certain great man in the neighbourhood, whose conversation over the bottle was more distinguished for pith than for polish. "Ye damned brute" was an appellation by which he very often designated his boon companions, and which sometimes grated on their feelings, although they well knew that nothing unkind was meant. On one occasion his lordship thinking the conversation was beginning to lag, called out to Rankine, "Hae ye nae queer story to gie us, ye damned brute?" "I hae nae queer story," quoth Rankine, "but I had a queer dream last night; I thought that I was dead, and that for keeping coarse company I was damned, and when I was brought to hell's yett, the devil asked me wha I was, and whare I cam frae? and I told him I was John Rankine o' Adamhill, and ane o' Lord K——'s damned brutes.—'What!' quo' Satan, 'anither o' Lord K——'s damned brutes! then ye's no be here, for hell's fou o' them already.'" The table was instantly in a roar, in which his lordship heartily joined; he felt the hit, however, and never again used the discourteous phrase.—M.

Spare't for their sakes wha aften wear it,
The lads in black!
But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
Rives't aff their back.

Think, wicked sinner, wha ye're skaithing
It's just the blue-gown badge and claithing*
O' saunts; tak that, ye lea'e them naething
To ken them by,
Frae ony unregenerate heathen
Like you or I.

I've sent you here some rhyming ware,
A' that I bargain'd for and mair;
Sae when ye hae an hour to spare,
I will expect
Yon sang,† ye'll sen't wi' cannie care,
And no neglect.

Tho' faith, sma' heart hae I to sing!
My muse dow scarcely spread her wing!
I've play'd mysel a bonnie spring,
And danc'd my fill!

* The allusion here is to a privileged class of mendicants well known in Scotland by the name of 'Blue Gowns.' If our historical recollections do not deceive us, the order was instituted by James V. of Scotland, the royal 'Gaberlunzie-Man.' The Brethren of the order assemble at Edinburgh every year, on the King's birth day, when each is presented with a new Blue Gown or Cloak, and a sum equal to a penny for each year of the king's age. To the breast of the gown is attached a round pewter plate, on which is inscribed the name of the wearer, and his warranty to pass unmolested. The insignia of the order is only bestowed on persons of good moral character; and by it they are distinguished from such 'Randie gangrel bodies,' as

'In Poosie-Nansie's held the splore
To drink their orra duddies.' M.

† A song he had promised to the author.

I'd better gane and sair'd the king
At Bunker's Hill.

'Twas ae night lately in my fun,
I gaed a roving wi' the gun,
And brought a paitrick to the grun,
A bonnie hen,
And as the twilight was begun,
Thought nane wad ken.

The poor wee thing was little hurt;
I straikit it a wee for sport,
Ne'er thinkin' they wad fash me for't;
But deil-ma-care!
Somebody tells the poacher-court
The hale affair.

Some auld us'd hands had ta'en a note,
That sic a hen had got a shot;
I was suspected for the plot;
I scorn'd to lie:
So gat the whissle o' my groat,
And pay't the fee.*

* Regarding this poem, and the circumstances to which it alludes, we cannot do better than subjoin the following excellent remarks from the pen of Mr Lockhart.

"The poet had not, as he confesses, come unscathed out of the society of those persons of 'liberal opinions' with whom he consorted in Irvine (during his flax-dressing experiment); and he expressly attributes to their lessons, the scrape into which he fell soon after 'he put his hand to plough again.' He was compelled, according to the then all but universal custom of rural parishes in Scotland, to do penance in church, before the congregation, in consequence of the birth of an illegitimate child; and whatever may be thought of the propriety of such exhibitions, there can be no difference of opinion as to the culpable levity with which he describes the nature of his offence, and the still more reprehensible bitterness with which, in his epistle to Rankine, he inveighs against the clergyman, who in rebuking him only performed what was then a regular part of the clerical duty, and

But, by my gun, o' guns the wale,
And by my pouther and my hail,
And by my hen, and by her tail,
I vow and swear!
The game shall pay o'er moor and dale,
For this, niest year.

As soon's the clockin-time is by,
And the wee pouts begun to cry,
Feth, I'se hae sportin by and by,
For my gowd guinea;

a part of it that could never have been at all agreeable to the worthy man whom he satirizes under the appellation of Daddie Auld. *The Poet's welcome to an Illegitimate Child* was composed on the same occasion,—a piece in which some very manly feelings are expressed, along with others which it can give no one pleasure to contemplate. There is a song in honour of the same occasion, or a similar one, about the same period, *The rantin dog the Daddie o't*,—which exhibits the poet as glorying, and only glorying in his shame.

"When I consider his tender affection for the surviving members of his own family, and the reverence with which he ever regarded the memory of the father whom he had so recently buried, I cannot believe that Burns has thought fit to record in verse all the feelings which this exposure excited in his bosom. 'To wave (in his own language) the quantum of the sin,' he who, two years afterwards, wrote the *Cotter's Saturday Night*, had not, we may be sure, hardened his heart to the thought of bringing additional sorrow and unexpected shame to the fireside of a widowed mother. But his false pride recoiled from letting his jovial associates guess how little he was able to drown the whispers *of the still small voice*; and the fermenting bitterness of a mind ill at ease within itself, escaped, (as may be too often traced in the history of satirists) in the shape of angry sarcasms against others, who, whatever their private errors might be, had at least done him no wrong.

"It is impossible not to smile at one item of consolation which Burns proposes to himself on this occasion:—

'The mair they talk, I'm kend the better;
E'en let them clash!'

This is indeed a singular manifestation of 'the last infirmity of noble minds.'"—M.

Tho' I should herd the buckskin kye
For't in Virginia.

Trowth, they had muckle for to blame;
'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,
But twa-three draps about the wame
Scarce thro' the feathers;
And baith a yellow George to claim,
And thole their blethers!

It pits me aye as mad's a hare;
So I can rhyme nor write nae mair;
But pennyworths again is fair,
When time's expedient:
Meanwhile I am, respected Sir,
Your most obedient.

SCOTS PROLOGUE,*

FOR MR SUTHERLAND'S BENEFIT NIGHT, DUMFRIES.

WHAT needs this din about the town o' Lon'on,
How this new play and that new sang is comin!

* This was accompanied with the following letter: "Sir, I was much disappointed, my dear Sir, in wanting your most agreeable company yesterday. However, I heartily pray for good weather next Sunday; and whatever aerial Being has the guidance of the elements, may take any other half dozen of Sundays he pleases, and clothe them with

Vapours, and clouds, and storms,
Until he terrify himself
At combustion of his own raising.

I shall see you on Wednesday forenoon. In the greatest hurry.
Monday Morning. R. B."

Why is outlandish stuff sae meikle courted?
Does nonsense mend like whisky, when imported?
Is there nae poet, burning keen for fame,
Will try to gie us sangs and plays at hame?
For comedy abroad he needna toil,
A fool and knave are plants of every soil;
Nor need he hunt as far as Rome and Greece
To gather matter for a serious piece;
There's themes enough in Caledonian story,
Would show the tragic muse in a' her glory.—

Is there no daring bard will rise, and tell
How glorious Wallace stood, how hapless, fell?
Where are the muses fled that could produce
A drama worthy o' the name o' Bruce;
How here, even here, he first unsheath'd the sword
'Gainst mighty England and her guilty lord;
And after mony a bloody, deathless doing,
Wrench'd his dear country from the jaws of ruin?
O for a Shakspeare or an Otway scene,
To draw the lovely, hapless Scottish Queen!
Vain all th' omnipotence of female charms
'Gainst headlong, ruthless, mad Rebellion's arms.
She fell, but fell with spirit truly Roman,
To glut the vengeance of a rival woman;
A woman, tho' the phrase may seem uncivil,
As able and as cruel as the Devil!
One Douglas lives in Home's immortal page,
But Douglases were heroes every age:
And tho' your fathers, prodigal of life,
A Douglas followed to the martial strife,
Perhaps, if bowls row right, and Right succeeds,
Ye yet may follow where a Douglas leads!

As ye ha'e generous done, if a' the land
Would take the muses' servants by the hand;

Not only hear, but patronize, befriend them,
And where ye justly can commend, commend them;
And aiblins when they winna stand the test,
Wink hard and say, the folks ha'e done their best!
Would a' the land do this, then I'll be caution
Ye'll soon ha'e poets o' the Scottish nation
Will gar fame blaw until her trumpet crack,
And warsle Time and lay him on his back!

For us and for our stage should ony spier,
"Whase aught thae chiels maks a' this bustle here?"
My best leg foremost, I'll set up my brow,
We have the honour to belong to you!
We're your ain bairns, e'en guide us as ye like,
But like good mithers, shore before ye strike.—
And gratefu' still I hope ye'll ever find us,
For a' the patronage and meikle kindness
We've got frae a' professions, setts and ranks;
God help us! we're but poor—ye'se get but thanks.

THE DEAN OF FACULTY.

A NEW BALLAD.

Tune—"The Dragon of Wantley."

Dire was the hate at old Harlaw,
That Scot to Scot did carry;
And dire the discord Langside saw,
For beauteous, hapless Mary:
But Scot with Scot ne'er met so hot,
Or were more in fury seen, Sir,
Than 'twixt Hal* and Bob† for the famous job—
Who should be Faculty's Dean, Sir.—

* The Hon. Henry Erskine. † Robert Blair of Aventon.

This Hal for genius, wit, and lore,
Among the first was number'd;
But pious Bob, 'mid learning's store,
Commandment tenth remember'd.—
Yet simple Bob the victory got,
And wan his heart's desire;
Which shows that heaven can boil the pot,
Though the devil piss in the fire.—

Squire Hal besides had in this case
Pretensions rather brassy,
For talents to deserve a place
Are qualifications saucy;
So their worships of the Faculty,
Quite sick of merit's rudeness,
Chose one who should owe it all, d'ye see,
To their gratis grace and goodness.—

As once on Pisgah purg'd was the sight
Of a son of Circumcision,
So may be, on this Pisgah height,
Bob's purblind, mental vision:
Nay, Bobby's mouth may be open'd yet
Till for eloquence you hail him,
And swear he has the Angel met
That met the ass of Balaam.—

* * * * * * *

EXTEMPORE IN THE COURT OF SESSION.

Tune—"Gillicrankie."

LORD ADVOCATE.

He clench'd his pamphlets in his fist,
He quoted and he hinted,
Till in a declamation-mist,
His argument he tint it:
He gaped for't, he graiped for't,
He fand it was awa, man;
But what his common sense came short,
He eked out wi' law, man.

MR ERSKINE.

Collected Harry stood a wee,
Then open'd out his arm, man:
His lordship sat wi' ruefu' e'e,
And ey'd the gathering storm, man;
Like wind-driv'n hail it did assail,
Or torrents owre a lin, man;
The Bench sae wise lift up their eyes,
Half-wauken'd wi' the din, man.

ADDRESS TO GENERAL DUMOURIER.

A PARODY ON ROBIN ADAIR.

You're welcome to Despots, Dumourier;
You're welcome to Despots, Dumourier.—
How does Dampiere do?
Ay, and Bournonville too?
Why did they not come along with you, Dumourier?

I will fight France with you, Dumourier;
I will fight France with you, Dumourier;
I will fight France with you,
I will take my chance with you;
By my soul I'll dance a dance with you, Dumourier.

Then let us fight about, Dumourier;
Then let us fight about, Dumourier
Then let us fight about,
Till freedom's spark is out,
Then we'll be damn'd, no doubt—Dumourier.*

POEM, ADDRESSED TO MR MITCHELL,

COLLECTOR OF EXCISE, DUMFRIES, 1796.

FRIEND of the Poet, tried and leal,
Wha, wanting thee, might beg or steal;
Alake, alake, the meikle deil
Wi' a' his witches
Are at it, skelpin! jig and reel,
In my poor pouches.

I modestly fu' fain wad hint it,
That one pound one, I sairly want it:
If wi' the hizzie down ye sent it,
It would be kind;
And while my heart wi' life bluid dunted,
I'd bear't in mind.

* It is almost needless to observe that the song of *Robin Adair* begins thus:

You're welcome to Paxton, Robin Adair:
You're welcome to Paxton, Robin Adair.—
How does Johnny Mackerell do?
Ay, and Luke Gardener too?
Why did they not come along with you, Robin Adair?

So may the auld year gang out moaning
To see the new come laden, groaning,
Wi' double plenty o'er the loanin
To thee and thine;
Domestic peace and comforts crowning
The hale design.

POSTSCRIPT.

Ye've heard this while how I've been licket,
And by fell death was nearly nicket;
Grim loun! he gat me by the fecket,
And sair me sheuk;
But by guid luck I lap a wicket,
And turn'd a neuk.

But by that health, I've got a share o't,
And by that life, I'm promis'd mair o't,
My heal and weal I'll take a care o't
A tentier way:
Then fareweel folly, hide and hair o't,
For ance and aye.

POEM ON LIFE,

ADDRESSED TO COLONEL DE PEYSTER, DUMFRIES, 1796.

My honour'd colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the Poet's weal;
Ah! how sma' heart ha'e I to speel
The steep Parnassus,
Surrounded thus by bolus pill,
And potion glasses.

O what a canty warld were it,
Would pain, and care, and sickness spare it;

And fortune favour worth and merit,
As they deserve:
(And aye a rowth, roast beef and claret;
Syne wha wad starve!)

Dame Life, tho' fiction out may trick her;
And in paste gems and fripp'ry deck her;
Oh! flick'ring, feeble, and unsicker
I've found her still,
Aye wav'ring like the willow wicker,
'Tween good and ill.

Then that curst carmagnole, auld Satan,
Watches, like baudrans by a ratton,
Our sinfu' saul to get a claut on
Wi' felon ire;
Syne, whip! his tail ye'll ne'er cast saut on,
He's aff like fire.

Ah Nick! ah Nick! it isna fair,
First showing us the tempting ware,
Bright wines and bonnie lasses rare,
To put us daft;
Syne weave, unseen, thy spider snare
O' hell's damn'd waft.

Poor man, the flie, aft bizzes by,
And aft as chance he comes thee nigh,
Thy auld damn'd elbow yeuks with joy,
And hellish pleasure;
Already in thy fancy's eye
Thy sicker treasure.

Soon heels-o'er gowdy! in he gangs,
And like a sheep-head on a tangs,
Thy girning laugh enjoys his pangs
And murd'ring wrestle,

As, dangling in the wind, he hangs
A gibbet's tassel.

But lest you think I am uncivil,
To plague you with this draunting drivel,
Abjuring a' intentions evil,
I quat my pen;
The Lord preserve us frae the devil!
Amen! amen!

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, Esq. OF FINTRY,

ON RECEIVING A FAVOUR.

I CALL no goddess to inspire my strains,
A fabled Muse may suit a bard that feigns;
Friend of my life! my ardent spirit burns,
And all the tribute of my heart returns,
For boons recorded, goodness ever new,
The gift still dearer, as the giver you.

Thou orb of day! thou other paler light!
And all ye many sparkling stars of night;
If aught that giver from my mind efface;
If I that giver's bounty e'er disgrace;
Then roll to me, along your wand'ring spheres,
Only to number out a villain's years!

ELECTION BALLADS.

BALLAD I.

THE FIVE CARLINES.*

THERE were five carlines in the south,
They fell upon a scheme,
To send a lad to Lunnun town,
To bring them tidings hame.

* We are indebted to our Friend Mr Lochore of Glasgow, for several of the following ballads, referring to Election contests between Gordon of Balmaghie, and Patrick Heron, Esq. of Heron and Kerroughtree—maternal grandfather to the present Sir Patrick Heron Maxwell of Springkell, &c. (1834.)

We do not think Burns shone to advantage in his electioneering verses; but, in a volume professing to contain all his poetical works, it might be considered unwarrantable to omit even these, although their interest is entirely of a local kind, and their allusions not now understood. With pleasure we quote the observations of Mr Lockhart on this part of the Poet's history:—

"Burns, after the Excise inquiry, took care, no doubt, to avoid similar scrapes; but he had no reluctance to meddle largely and zealously in the squabbles of county politics and contested elections; and thus, by merely espousing, on all occasions, the cause of the Whig candidates, kept up very effectually the spleen which the Tories had originally conceived on tolerably legitimate grounds. Of his political verses, written at Dumfries, hardly any specimens have as yet appeared in print; it would be easy to give many of them, but perhaps some of the persons lashed and ridiculed are still alive—their children certainly are so.

"One of the most celebrated of these effusions, and one of the most quotable, was written on a desperately contested election for the Dumfries district of boroughs, between Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, and Mr Miller, the younger, of Dalswinton; Burns, of course, maintaining the cause of his patron's family. There is much humour in The Five Carlines.

"The above is by far the best humoured of these productions. The election to which it refers was carried in Major Miller's favour, but after a severe contest, and at a very heavy expense."—M.

Nor only bring them tidings hame,
But do their errands there,
And aiblins gowd and honour baith
Might be that laddie's share.

There was Maggy by the banks o' Nith,*
A dame wi' pride eneugh,
And Marjory o' the Monylochs,†
A carline auld and teugh.

And blinkin Bess o' Annandale,‡
That dwelt near Solwayside,
And whisky Jean, that took her gill,
In Galloway sae wide.§

And black Joan, frae Crichton Peel,‖
O' gipsy kith and kin,—
Five wighter carlines warna foun
The south countrie within.

To send a lad to Lunnun town,
They met upon a day,
And mony a knight, and mony a laird,
Their errand fain would gae.

O mony a knight and mony a laird,
This errand fain wad gae;
But nae ane could their fancy please,
O ne'er a ane but twae.

The first he was a belted knight,**
Bred o' a border clan,
And he wad gae to Lunnun town,
Might nae man him withstan'.

* Dumfries. † Lochmaben. ‡ Annan. § Kirkcudbright.
‖ Sanquhar. ** Sir J. Johnstone.

And he wad do their errands weel,
And meikle he wad say,
And ilka ane at Lunnun court
Would bid to him guide day.

Then next came in a sodger youth,*
And spak wi' modest grace,
And he wad gae to Lunnun town,
If sae their pleasure was.

He wadna hecht them courtly gifts,
Nor meikle speech pretend,
But he wad hecht an honest heart,
Wad ne'er desert a friend.

Now, wham to choose, and wham refuse,
At strife thir carlines fell;
For some had gentle folks to please,
And some wad please themsel.

Then out spak mim-mou'd Meg o' Nith,
And she spak up wi' pride,
And she wad send the sodger youth,
Whatever might betide.

For the auld guidman o' Lunnun court†
She didna care a pin;
But she wad send the sodger youth
To greet his eldest son.‡

Then up sprang Bess o' Annandale.
And a deadly aith she's ta'en,
That she wad vote the border knight,
Though she should vote her lane.

* Major Miller. † George III. ‡ The prince of Wales.

For far-aff fowls hae feathers fair,
And fools o' change are fain;
But I hae tried the border knight,
And I'll try him yet again.

Says Black Joan frae Crichton Peel,
A carline stoor and grim,
The auld guidman, and the young guidman,
For me may sink or swim;

For fools will freat o' right or wrang,
While knaves laugh them to scorn;
But the sodger's friends hae blawn the best,
So he shall bear the horn.

Then whisky Jean spak owre her drink,
Ye weel ken, kimmers a',
The auld guidman o' Lunnun court,
His back's been at the wa';

And mony a friend that kiss't his cup,
Is now a fremit wight:
But it's ne'er be said o' whisky Jean—
I'll send the border knight.

Then slow raise Marjory o' the Loch,
And wrinkled was her brow,
Her ancient weed was russet gray,
Her auld Scots bluid was true;

There's some great folks set light by me,—
I set as light by them;
But I will sen' to Lunnun town
Wham I like best at hame.

Sae how this weighty plea may end,
Nae mortal wight can tell:

God grant the King and ilka man
May look weel to himsel.

BALLAD II.

WRITTEN IN 1795.

Tune—"For a' that, and a' that."

WHOM will ye send to London town,
To parliament and a' that?
Or whom in a' the country roun',
The best deserves to fa' that?
For a' that and a' that,
Through Galloway and a' that;
Where is the laird or belted knight
That best deserves to fa' that?

Wha sees Kerroughtree's open yett?
And wha is't never saw that?
Wha ever wi' Kerroughtree's met,
And has a doubt of a' that?
For a that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
The independent patriot,
The honest man, and a' that.

Tho' wit and worth, in either sex,
St Mary's Isle can shaw that,
Wi' dukes and lords let Selkirk mix,
And weel does Selkirk fa' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
The independent commoner
Shall be the man for a' that.

But why should we to nobles jouk?
And it's against the law that;
For why, a lord may be a gouk,
Wi' ribbon, star, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
A lord may be a lousy loun,
Wi' ribbon, star, and a' that.

A beardless boy comes o'er the hills,
Wi' uncle's purse, and a' that;
But we'll hae ane frae 'mang oursels,
A man we ken, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
For we're not to be bought or sold,
Like naigs and nowt, and a' that.

Then let us drink the Stewartry,
Kerroughtree's laird, and a' that,
Our representative to be,
For weel he's worthy a' that,
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
A house o' commons such as he,
They wad be blest that saw that.

BALLAD III.

Tune—"Fy, let's a' to the Bridal."

Fy, let us a' to Kirkcudbright,
For there will be bickerin' there;
For Murray's light horse are to muster,
And, O how the heroes will swear!

And there will be Murray Commander,
And Gordon the battle to win!
Like brothers they'll stand by each other;
Sae knit in alliance are kin.

And there will be black-nebbit Johnie,
The tongue o' the trump to them a';
An he getna hell for his troddin,
The deil gets na justice ava.
And there will be Kempleton's birkie,
A boy no sae black at the bane;
But as to his fine Nabob fortune,
We'll e'en let this subject alane.

And there will be Wigton's new sheriff,
Dame Justice fu' brawly has sped;
She's gotten the heart of a Busby,
But what has become o' the head?
And there will be Cardoness, Esquire,
Sae mighty in Cardoness' eyes,
A wight, that will weather damnation,
The devil the prey will despise.

And there will be Douglasses doughty,
New christening towns far and near,
Abjuring their democrat doings,
By kissin' the a— of a peer.
And there will be Kenmure sae gen'rous!
Wha's honour is proof to the storm;
To save them from stark reprobation,
He lent them his name to the firm.

But we winna mention Redcastle,
The body, e'en let him escape;
He'd venture the gallows for siller,
An 'twere na the cost o' the rape.

And where is our king's Lord-lieutenant,
Sae fam'd for his gratefu' return?
The billie is gettin his questions,
To say in Saint Stephen's the morn.

And there will be lads o' the gospel,
Muirhead, wha's as gude as he's true;
And there will be Buitles' apostle,
Wha's mair o' the black than the blue.
And there will be folk frae St Mary's,
A house of great merit and note;
The deil ane but honours them highly,
The deil ane will give them his vote.

And there will be wealthy young Richard,
Dame fortune should hing by the neck;
For prodigal thoughtless bestowing,
His merit had won him respect.
And there will be rich brother Nabobs,
Though Nabobs, yet men o' the first;
And there will be Colliston's whiskers,
And Quentin o' lads not the worst.

And there will be stamp-office Johnie,
Tak tent how ye purchase a dram;
And there will be gay Cassenearie,
And there will be gleg Colonel Tam.
And there will be trusty Kerroughtree,
Wha's honour was ever his law;
If the virtues were pack't in a parcel,
His worth might be sample for a'.

And can we forget the auld Major,
Wha'll ne'er be forgot in the Greys,
Our flatt'ry we'll keep for some ither,
Him it's only justice to praise.

And there will be maiden Kilkerran,
And also Barskimmin's gude knight;
And there will be roaring Birtwhistle,
Yet luckily roars in the right.

And there frae the Niddesdalé border,
Will mingle the Maxwells in droves,
Teugh Johnie, staunch Geordie and Wattie,
That griens for the fishes and loaves.
And there will be Logan M'Dowall;
Sculduddry and he will be there;
And also the wild Scot o' Galloway,
Sodgerin gunpowder Blair.

Hey for the chaste in'trest of Broughton,
And hey for the blossoms 'twill bring;
It may send Balmaghie to the Commons,
In Sodom 'twould made him a king.
And hey for the sanctified Murray
Our land wha wi' chapels has stored;
He founder'd his horse among harlots,
But gied his auld naig to the Lord.

BALLAD IV.

Tune—"Buy Broom Besoms."

Wha will buy my troggin,
Gude election ware;
Broken trade o' Broughton,
A' in high repair.

Buy braw troggin
Frae the banks o' Dee;
Wha wants troggin
Let him come to me.

Here's a noble Earl's
Fame and high renown,
For an auld sang—
It's thought the gudes were stown.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's the worth o' Broughton,
In a needle's e'e:
Here's a reputation,
Tint by Balmaghie.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's an honest conscience,
Might a prince adorn;
Frae the downs o' Tinwald,
So was never worn.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's the stuff and lining
O' Cardoness' head;
Fine for a sodger,
A' the wale o' lead.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's a little wadset,
Buittle's scrap o' truth;
Pawn'd in a gin-shop,
Quenching holy drouth.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's armorial bearings,
Frae the manse o' Urr;
The crest an auld crab-apple,
Rotten at the core.*
Buy braw troggin, &c.

* Here Burns alluded to the Rev. Dr Muirhead, minister of Urr in Galloway, a fellow rhymster. "The hit applied very well, (says Mr Chambers) for Dr Muirhead was a little, wind-

Here is Satan's picture,
Like a buzzard gled,
Pouncing poor Redcastle,
Sprawlin' like a taed.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's the worth and wisdom
Collieston can boast;
By a thievish midge,
They had amaist been lost.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

dried, unhealthy looking manikin, very proud of his genealogy, and ambitious of being acknowledged on all occasions as the chief of *the Muirheads!* He was not disposed however to sit down with the affront: on the contrary, he replied to it in a virulent diatribe, which we present to the reader for the first time, as a remarkable specimen of clerical and poetical irritability; and curious, moreover, as perhaps the only contemporary satire upon Burns, of which the world has ever heard, except the immortal 'trimming letter' from a tailor. Dr Muirhead's *jeu d'esprit* is in the shape of a translation from Martial's ode, '*Ad Vacerram.*'

'Vacerras, shabby son of whore,
Why do thy patrons keep thee poor?
Thou art a sycophant and traitor,
A liar, and calumniator,
Who conscience, (hadst thou that,) wouldst sell,
Nay lave the common sewers of hell
For Whisky.—Eke most precious imp,
Thou art a *gauger*, rhymster, pimp,
How comes it then, Vacerras, that
Thou still art poor as a church rat?'"

Mr Chambers is wrong in stating this to be, with the exception of the tailor's letter, the only contemporary satire on Burns. James Maxwell, "Poet in Paisley, and Student of Divine poetry," as he was fond of calling himself in his voluminous pamphlets, attacked Burns in this impromptu,

Of all British poets that yet have appear'd,
None e'er at things sacred so daringly sneer'd,
As he in the West who so lately has sprung
From behind the plough tail and from raking of dung.

Of this poetaster and his works, a very long account will be found in the Paisley Magazine.—M.

Here is Murray's fragments
O' the ten Commands;
Gifted by black Jock,
To get them aff his hands.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Saw ye e'er sic troggin?
If to buy ye're slack,
Hornie's turned chapman,
He'll buy a' the pack.

Buy braw troggin,
Frae the banks o' Dee;
Wha wants troggin,
Let him come to me.

BALLAD V.

JOHN BUSBY'S* LAMENTATION.

'Twas in the seventeen hundred year
O' Christ, and ninety five,
That year I was the waest man
O' ony man alive.

In March, the three and twentieth day,
The sun rose clear and bright;
But O I was a waefu' man
Ere toofa' o' the night.

Yerl Galloway lang did rule this land
Wi' equal right and fame,
And thereto was his kinsman join'd
The Murray's noble name!

* John Bushby, Esq. of Tinwald-downs.

Yerl Galloway lang did rule the land
Made me the judge o' strife;
But now Yerl Galloway's sceptre's broke,
And eke my hangman's knife.

'Twas by the banks o' bonnie Dee,
Beside Kirkcudbright towers,
The Stewart and the Murray there,
Did muster a' their powers.

The Murray, and the auld grey yaud,
Wi' winged spurs did ride,
That auld grey yaud, yea, Nidsdale rade,
Astray upon Nidside.

An there had been the yerl himsel',
O there had been nae play;
But Garlies was to London gane,
And sae the kye might stray.

And there was Balmaghie, I ween,
In the front rank he wad shine;
But Balmaghie had better been
Drinking Madeira wine.

Frae the Glenken came to our aid
A chief o' doughty deed,
In case that worth should wanted be,
O' Kenmore we had need.

And there sae grave Squire Cardoness
Look'd on till a' was done;
Sae, in the tower o' Cardoness,
A howlet sits at noon.

And there led I the Busbys a';
My gamesome Billy Will,

And my son Maitland, wise as brave,
My footsteps followed still.

The Douglas and the Heron's name,
We set nought to their score:
The Douglas and the Heron's name
Had felt our weight before.

But Douglasses o' weight had we,
A pair o' trusty lairds,
For building cot-houses sae fam'd,
And christening kail-yards.

And by our banners march'd Muirhead,
And Buittle was na slack;
Whose holy priesthood nane can stain,
For wha can dye the black?

BALLAD VI.

SKETCH OF AN EPISTLE TO R. GRAHAM, ESQ. OF FINTRY.

FINTRY, my stay in worldly strife,
Friend o' my muse, friend o' my life,
Are ye as idle 's I am?
Come then, wi' uncouth, kintra fleg,
O'er Pegasus I'll fling my leg,
And ye shall see me try him.

I'll sing the zeal Drumlanrig bears,
Who left the all-important cares
Of princes and their darlings;
And bent on winning borough towns,
Came shaking hands wi' wabster louns,
And kissing barefit carlins.

Combustion through our boroughs rode,
Whistling his roaring pack abroad,
Of mad, unmuzzled lions;
As Queensberry buff and blue unfurl'd,
And Westerha' and Hopeton hurl'd
To every Whig defiance.

But Queensberry, cautious, left the war,
The unmanner'd dust might soil his star,
Besides he hated bleeding;
But left behind him heroes bright,
Heroes in Cesarean fight
Or Ciceronian pleading.

O for a throat like huge Mons-meg,
To muster o'er each ardent Whig
Beneath Drumlanrig's banners;
Heroes and heroines commix
All in the field of politics,
To win immortal honour.

M'Murdo and his lovely spouse,
(Th' enamour'd laurels kiss her brows,)
Led on the loves and graces;
She won each gaping burgess' heart
While he, all conquering, play'd his part
Among their wives and lasses.

Craigdarroch led a light-arm'd corps;
Tropes, metaphors, and figures pours,
Like Hecla streaming thunder;
Glenriddel, skill'd in rusty coins,
Blew up each Tory's dark designs,
And bar'd the treason under.

In either wing two champions fought,
Redoubted Staig,* who set at nought
The wildest savage Tory,
And Welsh,† who ne'er yet flinch'd his ground,
High wav'd his magnum bonum round
With Cyclopean fury.

Miller brought up the artillery ranks,
The many pounders of the Banks,
Resistless desolation;
While Maxwelton, that baron bold,
Mid Lawson's port entrench'd his hold,
And threaten'd worse damnation.

To these, what Tory hosts oppos'd;
With these, what Tory warriors clos'd,
Surpasses my describing:
Squadrons extended long and large,
With furious speed rush'd to the charge,
Like raging devils driving.

What verse can sing, what prose narrate,
The butcher deeds of bloody fate
Amid this mighty tulzie?
Grim horror grinn'd; pale terror roar'd
As murther at his thrapple shor'd;
And hell mixt in the brulzie!

As Highland crags, by thunder cleft,
When lightnings fire the stormy lift,
Hurl down wi' crashing rattle;
As flames amang a hundred woods;
As headlong foam a hundred floods;
Such is the rage of battle.

* Mr Staig, then provost of Dumfries. † Then Sheriff.

The stubborn Tories dare to die;
As soon the rooted oaks would fly,
Before th' approaching fellers;
The Whigs come on like ocean's roar
When all his wintry billows pour
Against the Buchan Bullars.

Lo, from the shades of death's deep night,
Departed Whigs enjoy the fight,
And think on former daring!
The muffled murtherer of Charles*
The magna charta flag unfurls,
All deadly gules its bearing.

Nor wanting ghosts of Tory fame;
Bold Scrimgeour† follows gallant Grahame—‡
Auld covenanters shiver—
(Forgive, forgive, much-wrong'd Montrose!
While death and hell engulph thy foes,
Thou liv'st on high for ever!)

Still o'er the field the combat burns;
The Tories, Whigs, give way by turns;
But fate the word has spoken—
For woman's wit, or strength of man,
Alas! can do but what they can—
The Tory ranks are broken!

O that my e'en were flowing burns!
My voice a lioness that mourns
Her darling cub's undoing!
That I might greet, that I might cry,
While Tories fall, while Tories fly,
And furious Whigs pursuing!

* The masked Executioner of Charles I.
† John Earl of Dundee. ‡ The great Marquis of Montrose.

What Whig but wails the good Sir James;
Dear to his country by the names
Friend, Patron, Benefactor?
Not Pulteney's wealth can Pulteney save!
And Hopeton falls, the generous brave!
And Stewart bold as Hector!

Thou Pitt, shall rue this overthrow;
And Thurlow growl a curse of woe;
And Melville melt in wailing!
Now Fox and Sheridan rejoice!
And Burke shall sing, "O prince, arise!
Thy power is all-prevailing!"

For your poor friend, the Bard afar,
He hears, and only hears the war—
* * * *

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.*†

A DIRGE.

When chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning as I wander'd forth
Along the banks of Ayr,

* This poem is avowedly suggested by the old ballad entitled the 'Life and Age of Man,' although the management is quite different. The old poem is very affecting, and the management of it greatly superior to this, but in the poetry it falls far short. Why should it have been suggested that man was made to mourn? I deny the position.—H.

† The 'Life and Age of Man' is a ballad frequently to be met with on stalls, although Mr Cromek (see his Select Scottish Songs, Lond. 1810, vol. I. where it is inserted) appears to have experienced some difficulty in obtaining a copy. The era of its composition is fixed by its opening verse:

I spy'd a man, whose aged step
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years
And hoary was his hair.

Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?
Began the rev'rend sage;
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The miseries of man!

The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Outspreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride;

Upon the sixteen hundred year
Of God, and fifty three,
Frae Christ was born, that bought us dear,
As writings testifie.
On January the sixteenth day,
As I did lie alone,
With many a sigh, and sob did say,
Oh Man is made to moan!

In this ballad, "Whatever," Mr Lockhart justly observes, "might be the casual idea that set the poet to work, it is but too evident, that he wrote from the habitual feelings of his own bosom. The indignation with which he through life contemplated the inequality of human condition, and particularly—and who shall say with absolute injustice?—the contrast between his own worldly circumstances and intellectual rank, was never more bitterly, nor more loftily expressed than in some of these stanzas.

See yonder poor, o'er-laboured wight, &c.

The same feelings strong, but triumphed over in the moment of inspiration, as it ought ever to have been in the plain exercise of such an understanding as his, may be read in every stanza of *the Epistle to Davie.*"—M.

I've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return;
And ev'ry time has added proofs
That man was made to mourn.

O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Misspending all thy precious hours;
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force gives Nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right:
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn,
Then age and want, Oh! ill-match'd pair!
Show man was made to mourn.

A few seem favourites of fate,
In pleasure's lap carest;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.
But, Oh! what crowds in every land,
Are wretched and forlorn;
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
That man was made to mourn.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heav'n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,

Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn.

See yonder poor, o'er-labour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
By Nature's law design'd,
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn?

Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast:
This partial view of human kind
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressed, honest man,
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

O death! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn;
But, Oh! a blest relief to those
That, weary-laden, mourn!

LYING AT A REVEREND FRIEND'S* HOUSE ONE NIGHT, THE AUTHOR LEFT THE FOLLOWING VERSES IN THE ROOM WHERE HE SLEPT.

O Thou dread Pow'r, who reign'st above!
I know thou wilt me hear;
When for this scene of peace and love,
I make my pray'r sincere.

The hoary sire—the mortal stroke,
Long, long, be pleas'd to spare!
To bless his little filial flock,
And show what good men are.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes
With tender hopes and fears,
O, bless her with a mother's joys,
But spare a mother's tears!

Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,
In manhood's dawning blush;
Bless him, thou God of love and truth,
Up to a parent's wish!

The beauteous, seraph sister-band,
With earnest tears I pray,
Thou know'st the snares on ev'ry hand,
Guide thou their steps alway!

When soon or late they reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driv'n,
May they rejoice, no wand'rer lost,
A family in Heaven!

* The Rev. G. Lawrie.

THE FIRST PSALM.

THE man, in life wherever plac'd,
  Hath happiness in store,
Who walks not in the wicked's way,
  Nor learns their guilty lore!

Nor from the seat of scornful pride
  Casts forth his eyes abroad,
But with humility and awe
  Still walks before his GOD.

That man shall flourish like the trees
  Which by the streamlets grow;
The fruitful top is spread on high,
  And firm the root below.

But he whose blossom buds in guilt,
  Shall to the ground be cast,
And like the rootless stubble, tost
  Before the sweeping blast.

For why? that GOD the good adore
  Hath giv'n them peace and rest,
But hath decreed that wicked men
  Shall ne'er be truly blest.

A PRAYER,

UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH

O THOU Great Being! what thou art
  Surpasses me to know;
Yet sure I am, that known to thee
  Are all thy works below.

Thy creature here before thee stands,
All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul,
Obey thy high behest.

Sure thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath!
O free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design;
Then man my soul with firm resolves,
To bear and not repine!

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,*

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL, 1786.

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie Lark, companion meet!
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!
Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blithe, to greet
The purpling east.

* How much it is to be regretted that, in so sweet and pathetic a little poem, he should still allude to his own hard and hopeless fate; thus showing that this was ever upmost with him.—H.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless Maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,

By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink,
Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but heaven,
He ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives, elate
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!*

* "I have seldom met with an image more truly pastoral than that of the lark in the second stanza. Such strokes as these mark the pencil of the poet, which delineates nature with the precision of intimacy, yet with the delicate colouring of beauty and of taste."—*Mackenzie.*

"His stanzas 'To a Mountain Daisy, on turning one down with the plough,' have always been acknowledged as beautiful and interesting. His address 'To a Mouse, on turning her up in her nest with the plough,' evinces the fertility of his genius, and the unbounded benevolence of his heart. These two poems derive additional interest from the attitude in which the writer is himself presented to our view; we behold him engaged in the labours of the field, and moving in his humble sphere with all the dignity of honest independence and conscious genius. The exordium of his very poetical production entitled the 'Vision,' is also rendered interesting by the same circumstance; it exhibits Burns in the retirement of his homely cottage."—*Irving.*

"The address 'To a Mountain Daisy turned down with the plough,' is a poem of the same nature with the address 'To a Mouse,' though somewhat inferior in point of originality, as well as in the interest produced. To extract out of incidents so common and seemingly so trivial as these so fine a train of sentiment and imagery, is the surest proof as well as the most brilliant triumph of original genius."—*Currie.*

EPISTLE FROM A TAILOR,

THOMAS WALKER, OCHILTREE, TO ROBERT BURNS.

What waefu' news is this I hear,
Frae greeting I can scarce forbear,
Folk tells me, ye're gawn aff this year,
Out o'er the sea,
And lasses wham ye lo'e sae dear
Will greet for thee.

Weel wad I like war ye to stay,
But Robin, since ye will away,
I hae a word yet mair to say,
And maybe twa;
May He protect us night and day,
That made us a'.

Whar thou art gaun, keep mind frae me,
Seek Him to bear thee companie,
And, Robin, whan ye come to die,
Ye'll won aboon,
And live at peace and unity
Ayont the moon.

Some tell me, Rab, ye dinna fear
To get a wean, and curse and swear,
I'm unco wae, my lad, to hear
O' sic a trade,
Could I persuade ye to forbear,
I wad be glad.

Fu' weel ye ken ye'll gang to hell,
Gin ye persist in doin' ill—
Waes me! ye're hurlin' down the hill
Withouten dread,
And ye'll get leave to swear your fill
After ye're dead.

There, walth o' women ye'll get near,
But gettin' weans ye will forbear,
Ye'll never say, my bonnie dear,
Come, gie's a kiss—
Nae kissing there—ye'll girn and sneer,
And ither hiss.

O Rab! lay by thy foolish tricks,
And steer nae mair the female sex,
Or some day ye'll come through the pricks,
And that ye'll see;
Ye'll fin' hard living wi' Auld Nicks—
I'm wae for thee.

But what's this comes wi' sic a knell,
Amaist as loud as ony bell,
While it does mak' my conscience tell
Me what is true?
I'm but a ragget cowt mysel',
Owre sib to you!

We're owre like those wha think it fit,
To stuff their noddles fu' o' wit,
And yet content in darkness sit,
Wha shun the light,
Wad let them see to 'scape the pit
That lang dark night.

But fareweel, Rab, I maun awa,
May he that made us keep us a',
For that would be a dreadfu' fa'
And hurt us sair,
Lad, ye wad never mend ava,
Sae, Rab, tak' care.

ROBERT BURNS' ANSWER.

WHAT ails ye now, ye lousie bitch,
To thresh my back at sic a pitch?
Losh man! hae mercy wi' your natch,
Your bodkin's bauld,
I didna suffer half sae much
Frae Daddie Auld.

What tho' at times when I grow crouse,
I gi'e their wames a random pouse,
Is that enough for you to souse
Your servant sae?
Gae mind your seam, ye prick the louse,
And jag the flae.

King David, o' poetic brief,
Wrought 'mang the lasses sic mischief,
As fill'd his after life wi' grief
And bloody rants,
And yet he's rank'd amang the chief
O' langsyne saunts.

And maybe, Tam, for a' my cants,
My wicked rhymes, and drucken rants,
I'll gie auld cloven Clooty's haunts
An unco slip yet,
And snugly sit amang the saunts,
At Davie's hip yet.

But fegs, the Session says I maun
Gae fa' upon anither plan,
Than garren lasses cowp the cran
Clean heels owre body,
And fairly thole their mither's ban,
Afore the howdy.

This leads me on, to tell for sport,
How I did wi' the Session sort—
Auld Clinkum at the Inner Port
Cry'd three times, "Robin!
Come hither lad, and answer for't,
Ye're blam'd for jobbin."

Wi' pinch I put a Sunday's face on,
And snoov'd awa' before the Session—
I made an open fair confession,
I scorn'd to lie;
And syne Mess John, beyond expression,
Fell foul o' me.

A fornicator loun he call'd me,
And said my fau't frae bliss expell'd me;
I own'd the tale was true he tell'd me,
"But what the matter,"
Quo' I, "I fear unless ye geld me,
I'll ne'er be better."

"Geld you!" quo' he, "and whatfore no,
If that your right hand, leg or toe,
Should ever prove your sp'ritual foe,
You shou'd remember
To cut it aff, and whatfore no,
Your dearest member."

"Na, na," quo' I, "I'm no for that,
Gelding's nae better than 'tis ca't,
I'd rather suffer for my faut,
A hearty flewit,
As fair owre hip as ye can draw't!
Tho' I should rue it.

"Or gin ye like to end the bother,
To please us a', I've just ae ither,

When next wi' yon lass I forgather,
Whate'er betide it
I'll frankly gi'e her't a' thegither,
And let her guide it."

But, Sir, this pleas'd them warst ava,
And therefore, Tam, when that I saw,
I said "Gude night," and cam' awa',
And left the Session;
I saw they were resolved a'
On my oppression.

LIBERTY—A FRAGMENT.

THEE, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
Thee, famed for martial deeds and sacred song,
To thee I turn with swimming eyes;
Where is that soul of freedom fled?
Immingled with the mighty dead!
Beneath the hallow'd turf where Wallace lies!
Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death!
Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep;
Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,
Nor give the coward secret breath.
Is this the power in freedom's war,
That wont to bid the battle rage?
Behold that eye which shot immortal hate,
Crushing the despot's proudest bearing,
That arm which, nerved with thundering fate,
Brav'd usurpation's boldest daring!
One quench'd in darkness like the sinking star,
And one the palsied arm of tottering, powerless age.